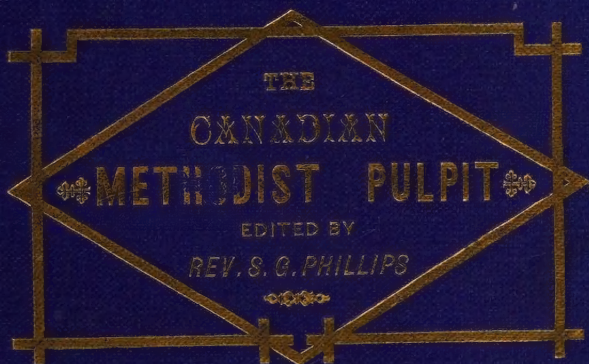


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THE CANADIAN
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METHODIST PULPIT:

A Collection of Original Sermons,

FROM

LIVING MINISTERS OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST
CHURCH IN CANADA.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION

BY REV. EDWARD HARTLEY DEWART.

REV. SAMUEL G. PHILLIPS, EDITOR.

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PREFACE.



THE publication of this volume has met the approval of the best men of our Church, as will be seen by the names of the contributors. To secure the number of sermons necessary has been no small task, as most of the ministers of the great Methodist Church do not write, nor preserve their sermons. Having, however, succeeded thus far, and believing that such a volume will be a valuable accession to any Christian library, I have been induced to proceed with the work.

The sermons are of a high order, and while they contain the peculiar views of the Methodists, they breathe the spirit of charity toward all; and the work might not be out of place in any Christian household.

To our own people, for Sabbath and leisure-hour reading, its value cannot be over-estimated. With confidence that it will do good, we send it forth upon the great ocean of religious literature, and, that God may direct it whithersoever He will, is the prayer of

THE EDITOR.

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INTRODUCTION.



WHETHER considered with respect to its origin, its history, its object, or its relation to other benevolent agencies, the teaching of the Christian pulpit justly claims a front rank among the most potent forces of our modern civilization. In claiming this place for the pulpit, we have no sympathy with the priestly claims of a certain class of preachers, and no desire to exalt the work of the ministry above the position which the divine arrangement and its own achievements in the world fairly claim for it. The preaching of the truths of the gospel by men whose own hearts have been quickened by its power, is no mere human invention. It is an ordinance of God's appointment, clearly stamped with tokens of Divine authority and approbation. In the Old Testament, we read of prophets and messengers raised up by God to rebuke the sins and follies of their times, and call back the faithless and recreant multitudes from irrational idolatry and unbelief to the worship of the one living and true God. But, in the New Testament, the

office of the preacher is lifted into still greater prominence, by being made the chief agency through which the tidings of life and salvation through Christ, are made known to a guilty and lost world. Before His ascension, the Risen Saviour made provision that a continuous testimony should be borne in the world for His name by chosen witnesses, who were anointed with power from on high, to qualify them for this special work. The Apostles were divinely authorized to "teach all nations," baptizing them in the name of the Triune God. The greatest of the apostles counted it his highest honour, that to him the grace was given to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," and he explicitly tells us, that, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Whatever may have been special and temporary in the apostolic office, the work of preaching Christ, as the only hope of perishing sinners, was to be permanent as the Church itself. The apostolic idea of the perpetuity of this office and work is clearly indicated by St. Paul, when he exhorts Timothy, his son in the gospel, saying: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." An ordinance so evidently chosen and appointed by God for a great purpose, and so intimately connected with the growth and stability of Christianity in the world, is not a mere arbitrary and temporary arrangement; but possesses an intrinsic and divine fitness for the accomplishment of its exalted and holy mission, which is a pledge and proof of its enduring power.

The history of the Christian pulpit presents a convincing

indication of this adaptation to enlighten the world's ignorance, by the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus ; and to bring guilty men from the slavery and defilement of sin into the enjoyment of the life and liberty of salvation. It is the history of the noblest spirits of the Christian centuries—the history of the growth of theological thought in different countries, and of the conflicts and successes of the Christian religion in the world. The pulpit has borne the standard of religion in the vanguard of intelligence, civilization and social progress. And so vitally has it been associated with the moral and intellectual condition of the people, and so great has been its influence in the formation of opinion and character, that its condition whether for good or evil has never failed to be reflected back by the community. When the standard of moral action, or religious life, presented from the pulpit has been low or defective, the spiritual condition of the people has exhibited a corresponding degeneracy. When the high requirements of scriptural morality, and the precious privileges of a full gospel salvation have been faithfully enforced by the teachings of the pulpit, the church has never failed to display corresponding growth in grace and spiritual manhood. Indeed, so intimately has the position and influence of the pulpit depended upon the fulness and faithfulness with which it has proclaimed the whole counsel of God, that wherever a formal and ceremonial type of religion has prevailed, the teaching of the pulpit has been thrust into the back ground, and its power has proportionally declined. The most striking illustrations of the power of the Christian pulpit has been associated with the most faithful and full presentation of the great truths of the gospel.

All along the Christian centuries, the pulpit has held aloft the torch of truth to dispel the surrounding gloom. Even in the darkest days of the Church the clergy were the chief conservators of the learning and piety of the times. From the day of Pentecost, when the sermon of Peter brought conviction of sin and the knowledge of the way of salvation to three thousand in one day, to the present time, the preaching of the gospel by a living ministry has been the most potent instrument in winning those victories, that have extended the Kingdom of Christ in the world. The Reformers that rejected the heresies and corruptions of their times, the Missionaries who planted the standard of the cross amid barbarism and idolatry, and the leaders in the great revivals that have quickened the languishing life of the Church in times of lukewarmness and worldliness, all achieved the work that have given them enduring renown, simply by preaching "the truth as it is in Jesus."

There are, however, many who admit the great achievements of the pulpit in past times, but deny that it is equally powerful now. The decline of the power of the pulpit is a favourite theme with those who have no true sympathy with the objects of Christian preaching. It is claimed that the press has almost entirely superseded the preacher as the instructor of the people, and the moulder of public opinion. It must be admitted that preaching does not occupy the same comparative eminence, that it did when it was the chief means of instruction. But, if through the growth of other agencies, the influence of the pulpit is relatively less, it is positively greater than at any former time. Most of the instrumentalities which now

aid in accomplishing the work which once exclusively belonged to the Christian preacher, have been called into existence by the teaching of the pulpit ; and are themselves the direct fruits of the agency which they are used to disparage. Have not the ministers of the Christian Churches generally been the leaders in the formation of philanthropic and benevolent societies ; and in the production and circulation of that religious literature that it is alleged has superseded the teaching of the pulpit ? There never at any former time was anything like so vast a number of people who are attentive listeners to the preaching of the gospel. There never was a time when sermons were so widely published and read as now. At no former time did the truths, which constitute the burden of the Christian preacher's message, receive such careful study and general attention as now. And never before were there so many men of distinguished learning, eloquence and genius in the pulpits of the different churches as to-day. What a host of eloquent preachers has been given to the churches of our day ! We have such men as Spurgeon, McLaren, Laudels and Stowell Brown among the Baptists ; Beecher, Binney, Parker, Baldwin Brown, Bushnell and Storrs, among the Congregationalists ; Punshon, Arthur, Simpson, McClintock, Douglas, Ryerson and Fowler among the Methodists ; Guthrie, Candlish, Caird, Arnott, Ormiston and Talmage among the Presbyterians ; Robertson, Melville, French, Liddon, Huntingdon and Tyng among Episcopalians ; and scores of others scarcely less renowned. It is preposterous to maintain that a generation starred with the names of such illustrious preachers, has been a period of decline in the influence of Christian preaching.

We believe that those who flippantly assume the decline of the pulpit, and regard it as an obsolete agency, misconceive its true mission and functions. They find fault with the preaching they hear, or fancy that others hear, because it does not accomplish things which are foreign to its divine purpose. The Christian preacher's main work must be with the conscience and spiritual nature of men. As long as he rightly apprehends the true object of preaching, and works in harmony with this right apprehension, preaching will not become obsolete or effete. For not only is preaching a divine ordinance, it has, as we have intimated, a divine adaptation to accomplish its object. Spoken words, embodying thoughts and feelings, are the natural mode by which mind most powerfully influences mind, both in reference to secular and sacred things, and though this method is not confined to ministers, for all who love Christ are to make Him known to others, yet it is in a special and emphatic sense the method of the ambassador for Christ, in his work of persuading his fellowmen to be reconciled to God. And as long as men are consciously guilty and dead in sin and desiring forgiveness and spiritual life, so long must the testimony of those, whose own hearts have been quickened and gladdened by living faith in Christ, possess preeminent fitness to lead sinners to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The power of the pulpit will decline only when those who occupy it preach for doctrines the commandments of men, by substituting their own theories for the simple verities of the Word of God; or preach the truth without faith and feeling. Things may be good enough in their own place that yet cannot be made the theme of preaching

without loss of power. It is not fair to compare the pulpit with agencies that have widely different aims, as if no such difference of object existed, and then declare the pulpit a failure, because it has not been more successful in what was only a very subordinate part of its work. The creations of the imaginations, the speculations of philosophy, and the discoveries of science are respectively the business of the poet, philosopher and scientist; and though they may minister to theology, should never be the main themes of the preacher. Wherever this is the case, whatever apparent success may accrue, there is a loss of that spiritual power without which the pulpit is shorn of its strength. But as long as the truth is preached in love to the conscience of men—as long as Christ is faithfully and fully proclaimed by men whose lips have been touched by living fire from heaven, and the message of the preacher is shown to be the power of God unto salvation, by sinners being converted and sanctified through its influence, “though the heathen may rage and the people imagine a vain thing,” the Christian pulpit shall continue to be the mightiest witness for truth and holiness, amid the folly and ungodliness of the world.

We cannot here dwell upon the different schools or styles of preaching that have prevailed at different periods in different countries. Successful Methodist preaching has always been distinguished by plainness and simplicity of language, directness of appeal, clearness in stating the doctrines relating to personal godliness and readiness in illustrating Scripture truth. We trust that this volume will show that the Canadian Methodist Pulpit still retains, in a good degree, these characteristics. I am gratified

with Mr. Phillips' idea of preparing a volume of sermons by Canadian Methodist Ministers. Two or three volumes of sermons by Canadian Presbyterian authors have been recently published ; and there are several good reasons to prompt and justify the publication of this volume. First, we may indulge the hope that words that have stirred the hearts of those who heard them spoken from from the pulpit will be read with spiritual profit in the privacy of religious meditation. Secondly, a record and specimen of the kind of preaching which is now being used in the Evangelistic work of our Church cannot fail to be of interest to all who pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom. In some of the ancient armouries of England I saw suits of armour, swords and other weapons of war that were reputed to have been used on certain historic occasions by kings or famous warriors. These are preserved with sacred veneration ; and should we not preserve with equal regard the weapons both of offence and defence that have been successfully wielded on the spiritual battle-fields of the Church? The present generation would read with deep and curious interest the sermons that were preached by the pioneer preachers, who laid the foundation of our Church in this country. But the sermons of to-day, that are forming the religious character and views of the people of this youthful nation are scarcely of less importance, and will be read with no little interest by the next generation.

In proportion as we cherish a high estimate of the objects sought to be accomplished by preaching will we feel anxious that the instrumentality used by the Church be adapted to secure the desired results. The greatness

of the preacher's work is seen from the grandeur of the truths and interests with which he deals. "What is divinity," says South, "but a doctrine, treating of the nature, attributes and works of the great God, as He stands related to His rational creatures, and the way how rational creatures may serve, worship and enjoy Him? And, if so, is not the subject of it the greatest, and the design and business of it the noblest in the world, as being no less than to direct an immortal soul to its endless felicity?"

I have not had the privilege of reading the sermons in this volume before writing these introductory words. But the names of the preachers are sufficient guarantee that the volume will be found worthy of attentive perusal, especially by the numerous membership of the Methodist Church of Canada. May the truths here presented be accompanied by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and be a means of affording spiritual strength and comfort to many readers.

E. HARTLEY DEWART.





BROKEN CISTERNS.

SERMON I.

BY THE REV. W. MORLEY PUNSHON, M.A., LL.D.

“For my people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.—JEREMIAH ii. 13.



EREMIAH was called to the exercise of the prophetic office in his youth. In his modest appreciation of himself, and shrinking from the onerous duty, he exclaimed: “ Ah, Lord God ! behold, I cannot speak : for I am a child.” But when God designates to any particular service neither the qualification nor the encouragement is lacking, and, child as he was, he departed fearlessly from Anathoth to Jerusalem that he might there deliver his message of rebuke and of warning. God seeth not as man seeth, and He who passed by the goodness of Eliab and his brethren, in order to raise David from the sheep-fold to the throne, selected this child to rebuke the lukewarmness and apostasy of priests high in office, and of elders venerable for age. The Jewish nation was at this time in

evil moral case. The spirit of godliness was almost extinct in its borders. It is impossible to imagine a more fearful depth of depravity than that which is presented to us in the eighth verse of the chapter from which the text is taken, where the very ministers of the sanctuary, those separated for the service of the holy shrine, are represented as being abettors and perpetrators of wickedness. "The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed before me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit." The prophet rebukes their impiety and rebellion by the consistency of the idolators around them, and marvels that they, the only nation under heaven to whom the true God had been revealed, should be the only nation under heaven that was so constantly given to change. "Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see: and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." And then, in an appeal, startling in its suddenness and in the strength of its language, and which could not fail to impress itself upon the hearts of those who listened to it like the distant but quailing reverberations of the mount that burned, he says: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Brethren, our circumstances to-day are very similar to

the circumstances of those to whom the prophet spoke. In many respects our condition is more analagous to theirs than to the condition of those to whom Paul preached and to whom Peter addressed his words of admonition and of warning. For the most part those to whom the evangelists preached, and to whom the apostles wrote, were just emerging from the tyranny of heathenism. To them the gospel was a novel proclamation; they needed to be instructed in its rudiments, and to be warned against the familiar immoralities of their former state. The prophecies, on the other hand, were addressed to those who lived under the shadow of long-cherished institutions; who had an established church; who had a ritual, time-honoured and holy; who had living teachers; who were fenced about with precept on the right hand and on the left. Their rebellion, therefore, was utterly inexcusable, and on them it was but fitting that the severest reprobation should descend. Brethren, if you remember your own privileges to-night, you will be convinced that surely the prophet might have spoken those words of you. Yours is the very brightest of the ages; the sun which shines upon you has gathered as into a focus all the scattered rays of the former dispensations and converged them in his own meridian. Yours are days after which prophets yearned, and which kings of the olden time wailed in one long ambition to see. Yours is a land where freedom girds the altar and where worship consecrates the throne; a land lively with the many runners that increase in knowledge, and bright with the radiance of an open vision. Yours are times of extraordinary spiritual endowment; when sabbaths are not yet shorn of their sacredness, and when thousands of sanctuaries

are eloquent of witness for the truth. God has permitted you to listen to a multitude of teachers who have brought the truth home to you, and who have enforced it in every variety of illustration and of appeal. Very adequately have you been furnished with the means of instruction and of salvation ; very faithfully have you been warned of danger ; very tenderly have you been made acquainted with the love of God in Christ. Yours is a very wonderful inheritance of privilege, and you cannot deny it, and if, after all, *you* become recreant and apostate, you trample upon such a multitude of mercies that the very heavens may well be desolate and horribly afraid, and God, regretful and grieving, may utter His complaint, " My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

The first thing, before we try to explain and enforce this appeal, is surely to notice the representation which is here given us of the character of God. In many parts of Scripture there are descriptions of Jehovah as He is in Himself, in the essence of His supreme and eternal divinity, and our spirits pale before the revelation of the attributes divine. We are confounded as we think of perfection without limit and without end ; of power uncontrolled in its lordship over all possible worlds ; of presence that is all-pervading ; of an eye to which there are no secrets, to which the depths are luminous, and to which midnight is as noon ; of justice whose decisions cannot possibly be impeached ; of wisdom whose plans in no solitary instance fail. Our minds are baffled by the very endeavour to comprehend, wearied by the intenseness of the light upon which we gaze. Truly, these are parts of His ways, but

how little a portion of Him is known, and the thunder of His power who can understand? Time brings us no nearer to the comprehension ; the problem becomes more intricate as we study it ; man by searching cannot find out God. He is dark to us, dark, both from His own excess of brightness, and from our infirmity of vision. His attributes are as a well upon whose brink we stand recoiling from the abyss beneath us, and exclaiming " Oh, the depths !" and yet in whose translucent waters we can see the stars at noon. If there were no other revelation than this, if all that we knew of God were the discovery of His essential attributes, we should be awed, perhaps, but we should not be affected and subdued. It would be difficult for us to realize that that God who is so transcendently glorious could ever come near us, could ever take account of us, could ever be brought into sensible and realizing connection with ourselves. There is a sense of remoteness inseparable from all human conceptions of enormous power which, in the absence of other tidings of the Holy One, would hardly have been dispelled ; we should hardly have felt the identity, so to speak ; we could hardly have imagined that that God whose glory crossing the gulf which separates us, we had seen so grandly shining, was our own and our fathers' God, who claims our heart's allegiance and our life's service, and whose smallest behests we are under obligation to obey. But in the text there is another revelation of God, not a revelation of Him as He is in Himself, in His essence, but a revelation of Him in His relations, not as He is in Himself, but as He is in His sufficiency and in His fulness for His creature man. He is presented as a fountain of living waters, the spring and the source of all

created good. How consoling and how tender the revelation ! Living water is the Old Testament symbol for the highest possible good, and when in that arid East with its familiar experience of drouth and sand, in the savage desert, just on the other side of the mountains that were round Jerusalem, they heard of water, living water, a fountain of living water which no typhoon ever choked and which no heat ever exhaled, it could not fail to represent to their minds the very highest possible good. And, brethren, these words, in the very amplest and widest of their meaning, we may apply to our own God. It has been well observed that " God-head " and " Goodness " are convertible terms ; that the old Saxon word " Good " is the very word from which our name " God " is derived, and that, therefore, goodness is the very essence of divinity, the cementing-bond of all the other attributes, and that in which they all adhere. It would seem, indeed, as if it were almost incorrect to speak of goodness as an attribute of the divine nature at all ; it is that nature itself, and all the other attributes are but its manifestations and displays—wisdom the mind of goodness, and power the arm of goodness, and omniscience the ear of goodness, and omnipresence the eye of goodness, and truth the tongue of goodness, and justice the conscience of goodness, and love the great beating and swelling heart of goodness. What is creation but goodness, finding new theatres for the display and for the exercise of itself ? What is Providence but goodness reducing discord into harmony ? What is grace but goodness repairing ruin and re-peopling solitudes, just as when the fire has burned and charred some street of squalid houses, on the site, by the skill of the artificer, goodly terraces and stately man-

sions rise. All that we can know of God resolves itself into this, "Thou art good and doest good." When the psalmist, the great interpreter of the believers of all time, would educe from his loved harp its melodies of sweetest song, it was to this tune, "I will abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness." When he felt the rapture of a new and spiritual existence, how naturally did he acknowledge its source—"In Thee is the fountain of life." If grace is to come to a world of sinners which, without it, were unhappy and despairing, where does the prophet trace its rise but from "the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness;" and in the perfected allotment, in the recompense of the beatific vision, there was "a river of water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb."

Brethren, with such representations of the character of God, we should naturally expect that all men would be charmed into obedience, and would wait in their honoured service that they might be allowed to do their Maker's will, finding in their performance of duty their fruition of delight. Hence, if we had been suddenly introduced into the world, if—with no inner arguments to convince us of our own estrangement—we had seen the wickedness of the world, we should have been shocked and startled by the accusation of the text, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Why, we should have called that an infatuation which was little short of lunacy; the rebellion of a people demented and needing only the fetters and the keeper; the ingratitude of a heart divorced utterly from the slightest fellowship with the good and

true. Our censure, if we had been called upon to speak it, would have been uttered in strong words ; our sentence, if we had been on the judicial bench, would have been very quickly pronounced ; and if the power of the judge had been commensurate with his sense of evil desert, in all cases the execution of the sentence would have been determined upon speedily. Ah ! brethren, your indignation is very just, but it has condemned yourselves. The accusation of the prophet may be very justly urged against ourselves ; and on both counts of the sad indictment, we stand arraigned, convicted and condemned. Examine your own hearts, and you will find in each one of them, unless Christ has happily cleansed them from their pollution, the elements of treason, the foul and audacious elements of blasphemy and rebellion against God.

There is something very startling in the thought that the appeal is not to the rebels themselves. They have had their chance, and it is over. The appeal now is to the external world, to the heavens that have looked down upon their crime, and to inanimate nature around them. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate." It is as though the transgressors have become obdurate to reproof, and are given up to the hardness of their hearts. They have been often warned, but God has ceased to importune them now ; their eyes did see their teachers, but those teachers have been withdrawn ; they were frequently chastened, if haply the rod of correction might drive from them their cherished folly, but they revolted even while they were stricken, and, under the strokes of the lash, went out into a deeper desperateness of evil, and now the correction has ceased only because they are incorrigible. Oh, is it possible,

brethren, is it possible that there should be any analogy? Is it possible that any of us can have so persistently sinned that God should appeal to us no longer, but that he should appeal against us rather, as if we were of obdurate and reprobate minds? Have we tampered so long with privilege that it has lost its opportunity? Have we been excluded from the inheritance of blessing? Has chastening ceased from us simply because we have passed reproof, and because there has come upon us that mysterious perverseness, that strange joining unto idols, which even God Himself will regretfully leave alone? Oh, let the spirit of searching be given to-night, and be used! God-forsaking, there is no wonder if we speedily become a God-forsaken people. There are melancholy instances in Scripture of the removal, or of the shackling, of abused privilege. That whitening trail of bones along the desert pathway—what does it mean? Oh, it means that the very men who passed in triumph through the restrained waters, and who heard, and quailed the while they heard, the law spoken in thunder, relapsed into unbelief, so that their carcasses fell in the wilderness. That weary-footed wanderer, bronzed with the sun of every clime, having a footing and a recognition everywhere, but nowhere in the wide, wide world a home, in whose soul, the while he seems restless only about his bargains, there is still a latent hope of a grand future, and who, even at his meanest and most sordid estate, has an ancestry prouder than the Plantagenets, and a destiny nobler than that of kings—what is his name, and why wanders he thus, fugitive, branded, and forlorn? Oh, you must go back to a hill of suffering and of shame; you must listen to an imprecation that was uttered there—an imprecation that

heaven heard and registered—"His blood be upon us and upon our children!" and you must trace the origin of the disinheritance of the Hebrew there. Those mounds, shapeless and undistinguishable, in the desert, with here a heap of stones, and there the splintered and crumbling shaft of a once stately column, conveying somewhat of the magnificence of its former glory—those cities on whose walls is the dust of doom, and which linger on in a dreary sort of life—

"Like hearts that break yet brokenly live on,"

—what is the meaning of these? What are they? Ah! these were the fairest and most cherished spots of ancient privilege! The Seven Churches flourished here whose angels were honoured to receive the direct commands of heaven. But the ploughshare of ruin has passed over these fields once so fertile; owls, and serpents, and dragons, are the only tenants of the chambers where princes once dwelt, and these cities of ancient blessing have been trodden beneath the foot of the Mohammedan! Brethren, can it be so with us? Is it possible that that can be any analogy? Is it possible that the privileges which now blossom so fair and so promising in our midst shall, by-and-by, be taken away? Yes; the same law of retribution exists, and has never yet been repealed. It needs but that we persevere in our rebellion and abandonment of God and He may silence the voice of testimony, or He may remove us where it may never be heard, or He may banish us beyond the sound of the church-going bell; or He may smite us with a lingering sickness, so that next door to the sanctuary we may never be able to enter it; or He may dethrone the reason, which alone can make

our visits to the sanctuary profitable, from its kingly seat, and let us gibber in the helplessness of idiocy, or rave in the frenzy of madness ; or—oh, most appalling vial of wrath that can be poured out from heaven !—He may withdraw from us the influences of His own Holy Spirit, and leave our God-forsaken hearts to their own perdition and despair ! Brethren, I deprecate that doom, and, with all the earnestness and with all the affection of a heart that has felt your peril, I urge you that you have decision for God !

“ My people have committed two evils,”—there is the point of the text—two evils—“ they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Now, although these two evils are spoken of as distinct, you will always find them in practice in intimate connection with each other, nor will you find the committal of the one without the committal of the other as well. If men forsake God, it is not that their hearts are emptied of desire. There is a restless instinct which prompts a life-search after happiness in the breast of every man. It is manifestly impossible that a nature like ours should be satisfied without it. There is a wealth of love within us, and it must have an outlet somewhere ; it cannot spill itself upon the unproductive surface of the desert. There is a wealth of energy within us, and it must have a direction and an activity. There is a wealth of purpose within us, and it must have some destined aim. There is no heart that has ever yet been dispossessed of a tenant. There are no hearts to let as there are houses. If God does not reign there Satan must and will. The strong man armed cannot be dispossessed except a stronger than he come in ; and the evil

enemy can only be exorcised by the energy of the power by which it is overcome. When men forsake the fountain, therefore, for the cisterns of their own skill, it is not that they have no thirst, it is not that their thirst is not consuming, but it is that they seek the slaking of their thirst in the waters of their own ingenuity and of their own belief. This is mentioned as a second evil, aggravating the bitterness and the turpitude of the first—"My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters"—that, in itself, is a foul and damning sin, but it is made worse by what follows—"and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." The very contemptuous character of the sources from which they hope for satisfaction aggravates the bitterness of their rebellion in forsaking God. Just notice it for a moment. "My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." There the fountain leaped, all free and unsolicited, by their side, jetting out its sparkling fulness without any effort of theirs ; but they preferred the labour of apostasy—they had to hew the cisterns out—they preferred the labour of apostasy to the enjoyment of obedience. They hewed them out cisterns ; they were too haughty to accept of happiness purchased for them by the merits of another, and in whose procurement they had no personal share ; "they hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water." Oh ! what a graphic description of the ways of the world ! You can almost see the profitless workers in the quarry, busy upon the granite, with the beaded sweat upon their brow, wielding the implements of their exhausting labour, while the

fountain leaps in bright cascade hard by them, as if in mockery of their toil! They hewed out to themselves cisterns. They hewed out to themselves: they spurned all help; they would not even avail themselves of the materials of the former time; they would not try to fill the empty cisterns of their ancestors! they would not take up the tantalizing labour just where other hewers, wearied with their toil, had dropped the axe and died. Such was the infatuation of their independence, that each one of them, though he had no new scheme, must have some new endeavour for the perfecting of the old; and they worked, each of them as hard and as stubbornly as if none had ever handled axe or played at reservoir before them. They “hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” And then notice the comparison still further. They hewed them out cisterns; that was the utmost of their ambition, and, of course, the utmost of their attainment. With the chances of the boundless ocean before them, which they did not fashion, they preferred the clumsy little receptacles which they could scoop out for themselves in the sand—cisterns, limited at best in capacity and in measure—broken cisterns, liable to be marred in the making, subject to a thousand accidents that might prematurely put an end to their existence, either from imperfect construction, or from the assaults of time—broken cisterns that could hold no water—mere expensive encumbrances, useless altogether for the purposes for which they were made.

And to think that the living God, the fountain of living waters, should be forsaken for things so utterly useless and unworthy! “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken

cisterns,"—this is the climax of it—"broken cisterns that can hold no water." Oh! you cannot wonder that at such an exhibition of the very stupidity of sin the very heavens should be desolate and horribly afraid, and that God, regretful and grieving, should again utter His complaint—"My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Throughout the whole of this appeal, brethren, you perceive that the reference is altogether on the human side. God does not speak of His own violated law, or of His own insulted honour; He speaks of man's disappointment, of the baffling of man's efforts, and of the utter ruin which it will bring upon the builders themselves. The tendency of the whole passage is to impress upon us just this:—that men take great pains to be foolish, that men make unheard-of efforts only to prove themselves impious and unhappy. They "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." There is no reference in this passage to the indolent; they are criminal, very deeply criminal, and there are many Scriptures which reprobate and condemn their crime, but they are not spoken of here. There is no reference, either, to the indifferent; their danger is imminent; their destruction does not slumber; but they are not among the foolish builders, they care for none of these things. The reference is to those who have a purpose, not to those who are too sluggish and idle to take axe in hand, but to those who have a purpose, who have energy, but who misdirect its power, and, either from their unbelief or their presumption, forsake the fountain of living waters, and

hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Now, as to the truth of this statement, do you not see it illustrated constantly, both in matters of human creed and in the practices of unconverted men? Just take these two thoughts for a moment—first, in matters of creed. “God made men upright, but they have sought out many inventions” of wickedness, and if you examine these inventions, you will find that they are cisterns of cumbrous ceremonial and of unsatisfying symbol. This is the case both when there is oblivion of the truth, and when the truth is held, in unrighteousness, both in false systems, and in false holdings of the true. Those rude superstitions of India, for example, are of no mushroom growth, no day’s efflorescence of a tropical vegetation; they have been piled up with infinite care and at infinite cost; they are the slow and heavy elaborations of years. Popery grew not at once into its insolent manhood of error; rebel reason, and unhumbled pride, and lordly churchmanship, and human avarice of power, and human love of mystery, and human impatience of restraint, and human hankering after easy absolution and permitted sin—all these were present, and they laboured hard and long until they beat Christianity down into that mis-shapen caricature of it which is in the midst of us to-day. And it is so with all systems of error; they are hard works of Satan, cisterns hewn out with amazing patience and with amazing ingenuity of toil. If you look to their moral effects among men, their exacting services, their utter hollowness and failure, the truth is still apparent that they are broken cisterns which can hold no water. How rigid are the rites, how intolerable the suspense, how merciless

the verdicts, how cruel are the penances, of heathenism ! All the gods of the heathen smite their worshippers ; they lap up drink-offerings of blood ; they delight in hecatombs of sacrifice. How vain is the heritage of the poor Romanist, taught to supplement the atonement of Christ by the cleansing of purgatory, and the intercession of Christ by the advocacy of meaner saints and angels ! the heir to the doled-out morsels of the Bible, and to a semi-sacrament, and to alien prayer ! What labour do they entail upon themselves who hope to merit justification by the deeds of the law ! how painful their penance ! how ostentatious their charities !

Their cumbrous ceremonials, their laboured vigils, all the consecrated antics of their ecclesiastical posture-masters—they are cisterns, all of them, cisterns that ought to be broken if they are not ; broken cisterns that can hold no satisfying, living water. Our souls loathe them ; we cannot be satisfied with these. Bid me choose the languor of the invalid when health is at my bidding ; bid me crouch to read by the light of the lantern in the crypt when the blessed sun is shining in the sky ; bid me cleave to the vaulted dungeon when the free hills sport with the shadows and the wild woodlands are gay with summer ; bid me, when the world is open to me for a place of rest, choose the churchyard for a dwelling ; or abide in the red-crossed house where the plague waits for its prey ; but bid me, O ! bid me not forsake the fountain of living waters, and choose these stagnant, empty, foolish cisterns of human superstition, while from the Saviour's heart, all fresh and sparkling, there flows the issuing blood. My brethren, if you have a Christless theology, if there is anything in your creed that derogates unworthily from the

perfection of His character, or that does not lead you directly and at once to Him, away with it ! Bid it begone ! It is a broken cistern that can hold no water. Oh, come ! and with your full belief, the belief of a heart which no misgiving shall cause to doubt, rest your whole salvation here ; you cannot then suffer shame. However dark you are He will enlighten you ; however vile you are He will cleanse you ; however imperilled you are He will deliver you ; and, long after the little children of the kingdom are playing upon the ruins of Earth's broken cisterns, you shall rejoice in the flashing fulness of the fountain ; as buoyant in the snow as in the sun ; blessing you in the dullest December with the warmth of a perpetual July ; and, in its inner and spiritual cleansing, fitting you, through all the vicissitudes of earth, to be uplifted from out of the night of the sepulchre into the rest and fellowship of heaven's sacred, high, eternal noon !

And then take the other thought, which is a matter that comes more practically home to your own bosoms. If you look at the ordinary pursuits in which the ungodly cast their lives away you will find an illustration of the same truth. They entail mighty labour, all of them, upon their votaries, and the results at which they arrive are results of disappointment and shame. The way of transgressors is hard—hard—very hard ; God has made it so, and He has made it so on purpose to deter men from the commission of evil. How rarely, for example, can men tell a lie, one lie I mean—only one ! They are obliged to pour out one upon the heels of another, just to cover, with a sort of moral gauze, their first departure from the truth. Fraud, once yielded to and concealed, begets a numerous progeny (like Adam) in its own likeness ; and

there are many who blushed like innocence on their first departure from the right, who will perpetrate, when they are schooled in the labour, giant frauds without remorse, without scruple and without shame. The way of transgressors is hard, and all the cisterns that they pile up are broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Look at them in the midst of their career. Look at the eager worldlings, each intent upon his own desire, shaming—alas, that it should be so!—shaming, by their absorption in their business, the children of the Kingdom; for the children of this world are still, as the Saviour said they were, wiser than the children of Light. Look at them. How hard they labour! See that pleasure-seeker, whose whole life is bent on pleasure—see how, with tripping feet, she whirls from one gay scene of dissipation to another!—heedless of health; heedless of food; heedless of rest! The whole business of the life a search for pleasure; constantly at work, at it in the day-time, and flaunting out far into the night. Ah! she is busy with her cistern, and it will be finished soon—*finished soon!* That companion of hers of the opposite sex, a less refined but equally eager, devotee of pleasure, drinking, in his search after pleasure, deep draughts from Circean cups; found wherever the world proclaims its carnival; going into places, by-and-by—not at first, but by-and-by—from which decency recoils; herding with the very scum and offscouring of all—he is busy with his cistern, and it will be finished soon! Yes; and that refined and classical scholar, who looks contemptuously at these pleasure-lovers as they speed rapidly past him, who pores over his books, and who is earnest in his pursuit of knowledge—he, too, is busy with his cistern, it is more classically

shaped, perhaps, and of a more refined type of architecture, but it is a cistern, notwithstanding, a broken cistern, that can hold no water—he is busy with his cistern, and it will be finished soon! That miser, covetous of applause, to whom the good opinion of his fellows is like the nectar and ambrosia of the gods—he is busy with his cistern, and oh, how hard he works! What will he not endure! What disappointments he puts up with! He does not suffer any of them to turn him aside as he glances up the hill, but oh, how cold it is when he gets there! He has no companionship there! It is all solitary at his lonely height, and he stands, like the poor spirit that was found dead with the “Excelsior” banner on the top of the hill, envying the happy homes beneath in which the laughter sounds, and from which there warbles up to his dim and perilous distance the voice of the evening song; ah! he is busy with his cistern, and it will be finished soon! That other miser, covetous of treasure, least erect of all the spirits that fell from heaven he has taken for his model, and he is scraping together continually, with an ambition and a jealousy which in aught else were laudible, the treasure he cannot carry with him; he is busy with his cistern, and it will be finished soon! Oh, how hard they all work! Oh, how they deny themselves of sleep! How they deny themselves of comfort! How they grudge anything for their own expenditure! How they would hail any discovery that should economise modes of living, or modes of thought, or modes of locomotion! They are busy with their cisterns, all of them! The affections contract, purposes contract, the one grand thought occupies them fully, and the great world outside dies out, and the thought and memory of life. They are

busy with their cisterns,—they are cisterns that hold no water, but they will be finished soon. Hark to that pleasure-seeker as, with dim eye and heaving bosom, she sobs out with her last gasp the most terrible experience that human language can ever embody or express—the experience of a soul that is dead while it lives—“Vanity of vanity, all is vanity!” Hark at that other pleasure-seeker as he is brought prematurely by his own vices, that sting him, like harpies and like furies now, to the bed of affliction or to the couch of pain, or to the dread meeting with the last enemy before his time! Hark at him as he sighs forth his experience of the past in accents of remorse which it were difficult to parallel. “The wicked shall not live out half their days.” See the pale and tired student, his life, a life departing young, as with eye of unnatural brilliancy he revels in an ideal which he shall never be spared to see! Ah!

“Saddest sign of his condition
Is his bounding, wild ambition;
None but dying eyes could gaze on
So bright a vision!”

See the miser covetous of fame; he has enjoyed it, or fancied he did, for a little while; but now he gnashes his teeth in rage because his glory has all gone from him, and the welkin rings with the name of his successful rival! See that other miser, covetous of treasure—no thief has come to rob him of his property—but death comes to rob the property of its lord. He has added house to house, and field to field; he is reputable and rich; his name is honoured; and men swear by him, and he is reputed as one of the pillars of the state; but at last there comes a

creditor who will not be cheated of his due. He feels the fibres of his heart relaxing, and he takes his last gripe of the gold he has loved so well, as the agonizing thought comes over him that where he is going gold is not the currency, and that he cannot take it with him, and that the heir to whom he must perforce leave it, after all his endeavours, is a vile spendthrift and a prodigal ! Broken cisterns—all of them ! broken cisterns that can hold no water. Oh, why do men spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not ? Why do the prodigals stop out in the fields, among the husks and among the swine, when the Father's house is ready, and the Father's heart is open, and the Father's banquet is spread, and the Father's invitation is given, and the Father's minstrels are waiting to lead off the song—"This my son which was dead, is alive again, was lost, and is found !" ? Brethren, it is to you I make my appeal to-night. There are some of you—you know there are—whose experience has been described. You have been making cisterns too long. You are not satisfied ; you are restless ; you are unhappy. I charge you with being unhappy, in spite of all the efforts you make to disguise it. You are not, you cannot be happy as long as you are out of Christ. But I offer you happiness without money and without price. Oh, that you would take it ! Christ waits to be gracious to you, as well as to receive you. Oh, come to him ! He says "Come unto me all ye that are weary"—that is just you—"and heavy laden"—that is just you—"Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and you shall find rest unto your souls." I ask you to come away from your distempered dreams of freedom. There is a fountain opened ;

there is living water ; and whosoever drinketh of this water shall never thirst. All the consuming horror of the appetite shall be gone ; there shall be a satisfaction which will allay all anxiety, and anticipate every desire. "Who-soever drinketh of this water shall never thirst, for the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." May God help you that these two evils may be averted from you, and that you may partake of this living water, for the Redeemer's sake.





A GOOD MAN, FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST AND OF FAITH.

SERMON II.

By REV. E. RYERSON, D.D., CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT
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“For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.”
—ACTS xi. 24.

[NOTE.—The substance of the following Sermon was delivered before the Wesleyan Conference, London, Upper Canada, Sabbath evening, June, 1865, on the occasion of the death of the late Rev. W. L. Thornton, M.A., who was President of the Canadian Conference in 1864. The sermon was prepared and delivered at the request of the President of the Conference (Rev. R. Jones) and his advisers. The Conference requested its publication; but though prepared at the time, according to the request of the Conference, the author omitted to send it to the press.]



Y the economy and promise of Divine wisdom and goodness, “all things work together for good to them that love God.” Thus the poverty of God’s people issues in wealth; the tears of their afflictions are transmuted into fountains of joy; and the assaults of their adversaries for their destruction, no less than the prayers of

their friends for their salvation, contribute to strengthen their faith and perfect their love. It is not in the sheltered valley, but on the mountain top, where most exposed to winds and storms, that the oak strikes the deepest root: so the disciple of the Lord Jesus becomes established in grace by means of the very efforts which are made to subvert his soul. Such an one, in his hours of trial and conflict, will say, "nevertheless, my soul, wait thou still upon God, for my hope is in Him:" and, "the Lord is good to them that wait for Him." He makes bare His arm in their behalf by strengthening them to endure the trial, or by delivering them from it; and the believer thus acquires a two-fold advantage: testimony to his own sincerity and acceptance, removing all doubt and uncertainty as to his filial relationship to God, and a demonstration of the Divine faithfulness and power in his behalf—producing in his heart "the full assurance of faith and hope."

It was a succession of sanctified trials and deliverances—and what trials and deliverances they were! as narrated in his Epistles—that enabled the Apostle Paul to say: "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." And the effect is invariably the same in regard to every believer. "Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed."

What is true of each disciple of Christ is true of His whole Church; and what is true in regard to the establishment of the kingdom of God in the hearts of His people, is equally true in regard to its extension in the world. "The gates of hell," the councils and armies of

the devil and his hosts, so far from having prevailed against the Church of Christ, have often contributed to promote both its purity and enlargement. The emissaries and servants of Satan have often thought and boasted, not only that they would soon crush the power of the Nazarene King; but that they had done so. Thus, during the Roman persecutions which for two hundred years crimsoned the Church of Christ, the Emperor Diocletian had a medal struck with this inscription: "*The Christian name demolished, and the worship of the gods restored.*" But the blood of the martyrs became a fruitful seed of the true Church's power and extension; and, within twenty-five years after this medal of blasphemous triumph was struck, the worship of the gods ceased to be the national worship of the Romans—and the emblem of the cross of Christ was inscribed on the banners of the Empire. So, in the very beginning of the Church, we have an illustration of its characteristic history in the chapter before us:

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

"And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus."

"And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."

"Then the tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was at Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God,

was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith : and much people was added unto the Lord.”—Acts xi. 19–24.

And thus in the persecutions of intolerance which prevailed to a greater or less extent in Protestant England during the reigns of Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the First, many who loved the truth as it is in Jesus were then scattered abroad to America, where they planted trees of righteousness, which have flourished and multiplied to this day from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to that of Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Thus in later times the pressure of misfortunes and poverty has thrust out many an emigrant from England, Ireland and Scotland to this continent and to this country, who has become the “voice of one crying in the wilderness,” and the pioneer cultivator not only of moving corn-fields, but of wide-spread, and wide-spreading fields of Scriptural knowledge—the knowledge “of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent.”

In the English Wesleyan Magazine for April (1865), we have the following interesting statement :—“ On a spring morning in 1760 (says an Irish authority apparently familiar with the local facts), a group of emigrants might have been seen at the Custom-house quay, Limerick, preparing to embark for America. At that time emigration was not so common an occurrence as it is now, and the Palatines from Balligarrane were accompanied to the vessel’s side by crowds of their companions and friends, some of whom had come sixteen miles to say, ‘farewell’ for the last time. One of those about to leave—a young man, with a thoughtful look and resolute bearing—is evidently

the leader of the party ; and more than an ordinary pang is felt by many as they bid him farewell. He had been one of the first-fruits of his countrymen to Christ, had been the leader of their class, and in their humble chapel had often ministered to them the word of life. He is surrounded by his spiritual children and friends, who are anxious to have some parting words of counsel and instruction. He enters the vessel, and from its side once more breaks among them the bread of life. And now the last prayer is offered ; they embrace each other ; the vessel begins to move. As she recedes, uplifted hands, and uplifted hearts attest what all felt. But none of all that vast multitude felt more, probably, than that young man. His name is Philip Embury. His party consisted of his wife, Mary Switzer, to whom he had been married on the 27th of November, 1758, in Rathkeale church ; two of his brothers, and their families ; Peter Switzer, probably a brother of his wife ; Paul Heck and Barbara his wife ; Valer Tettler ; Philip Morgan, and a family of the Dulmages. The vessel arrived safely in New York, on the 10th of August, 1760. Who that pictures before his mind that first band of Christian emigrants, but must be struck with the simple beauty of the scene ? Yet who among the crowd that saw them leave could have thought that two of the little band were destined, in the mysterious providence of God, to influence for good countless myriads, and their name should live as long as the sun and moon endure ? Yet so it was. That vessel contained Philip Embury, the first class-leader and local preacher of Methodism on the American continent ; and Barbara Heck, ‘a mother in Israel ;’ one of its first members, the germ from which, in the good providence of God,

has sprung the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States ; a church which has now, more or less, under its influence about seven millions of the germinant mind of that new and teeming hemisphere !—‘There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains ; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon ; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.’”

In the progress of this great work, more frequent and intimate communication has, of late years, taken place between the elder and junior branches of the Methodist family. The mutual greetings and counsels of the British and American connexions of the once Wesleyan body have been transmitted by mutual representatives. The last of these representatives from the Parent Church in Great Britain, was the late W. L. Thornton, who, last year, after having delivered his message of peace and love to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, visited Canada as the President of this Conference, and then the Maritime Provinces, as the President of the Eastern Conference of British North America. Immediately after his return to England, he was, with unprecedented unanimity, chosen President of the British Conference, and as such, President of the Wesleyan Conference in Ireland. For the first time in the history of Methodism, the same person was at the same time President of four Wesleyan Conferences, and representative to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States ; and while thus presiding over Conferences embracing some two thousand ministers, having the pastoral oversight of more than two millions of souls, he was suddenly, one Sabbath morning, the 5th of March, dismissed from his labours to his

reward, giving as his last utterance on earth—"Thy mercies abound—Thy mercies abound!"

In obedience to the request of the highest officers in this Body, I address you on the occasion of Mr. Thornton's decease. The text I have read suggests a simple and truthful description of his general character.

I. IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THIS EMINENT MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST, AS IN THAT OF APOSTOLIC BARNABAS, WE NOTICE FIRST, THE FACT THAT "HE WAS A GOOD MAN."—God alone is perfectly and unchangeably good; and to be a good man implies creation in God's image of knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. This involves a thorough change of heart, for "the heart is naturally deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" or, as it is expressed in the 9th Article of the Church of England, "Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." This evil heart, this sinful nature, can no more be changed by human culture, or human power, than can the dead be raised or life created by human power. "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature;" or, as the literal rendering is, it is a new creation; "old things are passed away, behold"—as though the Apostle would have us note and admire the change—"behold all things are become new!" A "good man" is as much the workmanship of God now, as when Adam and Eve were created in the Divine image of righteousness and true holiness. Such was Barnabas. His goodness was not the "work of the flesh"—the produce of any culture or habit

that man can effect—it was the “fruit of the Spirit,” the effect of regenerating grace. The expression literally signifies, he was a kind, benevolent, tender-hearted man, the affections of whose heart had been cast in the mould of the Gospel, and renewed after the Divine image—one who, as “the elect of God,” had put on “bowels of mercies,” and was peculiarly distinguished by the engaging sweetness of his spirit. Indeed, his Christian name seems to have been given him in direct reference to the character of his renewed disposition. He is first introduced to our notice in the fourth chapter of Acts, in the following words: “And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles’ feet.” The circumstance here recorded of him, no less than the significant change in his name, is a striking confirmation to the testimony borne to him in the text. The change wrought in him caused him to consecrate his property as well as himself to the glory of his Divine Master, and in affectionate endeavours for the salvation of mankind.

Such was the change wrought in the heart of President Thornton, which invested him in so high a degree with the attributes and character of “a good man.” He was blessed naturally with an amiable disposition and high intellectual powers, which were developed and refined by an excellent classical and mathematical education, together with careful religious instruction and training by his pious parents. Though, like St. Paul, as a scholar and religionist, he “profited above many of his fellows,” and was no doubt regarded as a good, as well as a clever

boy, it was not until he was “born again”—born of the Spirit—that he acquired those elements of goodness which gave character to the whole of his future life. It was when he was about seventeen years of age, that he yielded to those teachings of the Holy Spirit which effectually “convinced him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,” and made him feel and confess, as it is truly expressed in the service of the Church of England, that he was a “miserable sinner,” that “the remembrance of his sins was grievous unto him, and the burden of them intolerable.” So that, as it is expressed in the same service for the sick, he was made to know and *feel* that there is “no other name than that of Jesus whereby we must be saved;” and, resting his soul on that name for pardon and salvation, he experienced the truth of the Saviour’s promise, “he that believeth on the Son of God *is passed* from death unto life;” he was created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works; and could attest what is stated in the homily of the Church of England on certain places of scripture: “godly men feel inwardly the Holy Ghost inflaming their hearts with the fear and love of God, and they are miserable wretches who have not such feeling of God in them at all.” Three years after the “translation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son,” at the age of twenty, Mr. Thornton, after the usual trial and examinations, was received and employed in the Wesleyan ministry; and, whether as a minister on some of the most important circuits in Great Britain for eleven years, or as classical and mathematical tutor in the Theological Institution of the Connexion during eight years, or during fifteen years as editor of the Wesleyan Magazine, and other connexional publications, or

filling the highest office in the church, or in any of the private relations of life ; all that heard, read, or knew him, bore willing and heartfelt testimony to him, as "a good man."

II. 1. But of Barnabas it is recorded, secondly, that "HE WAS FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST." It was so said of Stephen the first lay preacher and poor-steward, and the first martyr of the Church, that he was "a man full of the Holy Ghost." It was so said of all the members of the Church on the day of Pentecost, "and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." And, what is meant by being full of the Holy Ghost ? It implies two things ; first, living up to our privilege as believers in Christ ; secondly, special gifts and qualifications for the special work to which we may be called. In the former sense, it is common to all Christians ; in the latter sense, it applies to those who are called to special work, whether as ministers or missionaries, as leaders or other officers in the militant Church of Christ.

Understanding the expression in the former sense—as referring to the state of the believer's mind, it implies the renewal of his heart and the witness of his relationship. By the pardon of his sins and the renewal of his heart, he becomes a child of God. "And because ye are sons" (says St. Paul), "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." "The Spirit of God beareth witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God."

2. BUT, TO BE FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST IMPLIES MUCH MORE THAN HIS COMMUNICATION AS A SPIRIT OF ADOPTION AND WITNESS. IT INVOLVES THE RECEPTION

OF HIM IN ALL HIS CHARACTERS AND OFFICES—His teachings and convictions as a Monitor, as well as His consolations as a Comforter—His impressions as a seal of the Divine image, no less than His joys as an earnest of the final heaven. The attributes of His person, and the aspects of His office are not revealed that we may select such elements as are most agreeable to our tastes and inclinations, but we are to accept Him in them all, and resist or grieve Him in none—to receive Him in the grandeur and fulness of His character, as taught in His word, as illustrated in the person of Christ, as manifested in the conversion of the early Christians, as the dove that descended upon Christ, as the lambent flame that rested on the first disciples, as the rivers of water springing up unto everlasting life.

3. Again, to be full of the Holy Ghost is to receive His Divine influences in all their variety, power, efficacy and harmony—to receive His distinct impress on all the faculties of the mind, according to the character and wants of each individual. As the same shower blesses the different kinds of soil according to their respective susceptibilities—causing the grass to spring up in the meadows, the grain to vegetate in the field, the trees to grow in the forest, and the flowers to blossom in the garden—and these garnished with every variety of hue and loveliness, the lily and the violet, the rose and the daisy ; so the Holy Spirit descending upon the moral soil, produces convictions in the guilty, illumination in the ignorant, holiness in the defiled, strength in the feeble, and comfort in the distressed. As the spirit of adoption, He excites the filial feeling and cry of Abba, Father ; as the spirit of witness He attests our sonship with God ; as a

spirit of holiness He imparts a pure taste and love ; as a spirit of life He revives religion ; as a spirit of truth He gives transparency to conduct ; as the spirit of glory He throws a radiance over character ; as the spirit of prayer He melts the soul into devotion ; as the spirit of grace He imbues with benevolence and covers the face of the land with the works of faith and labours of love. A Christian full of the Holy Ghost receives all these influences not only in their fulness and variety, but in their highest degree and largest exercise. As the Spirit was given to Christ without measure, there is nothing to restrict the communication of His influences to us. There is nothing in the abyss of eternity to measure the depths of our holy fear ; nothing in the heights of glory to check our loftiest hopes ; nothing in the dimensions of the universe to limit the expansion of our love. Of the first trophies of the cross on the day of Pentecost, it is said, "great grace was upon them all." This is what we need now. We have a great God to serve, whom we should glorify with all our ransomed powers of soul and body ; we have a great work to do, a great part of which remains undone ; we have great opposition to master and great difficulties to overcome. We therefore need great grace in the highest degree, in the fullest exercise, in the largest action. We need great love to melt us into compassion for the world that lieth in the wicked one ; we need great faith to give us courage and intrepidity that will not cower before any foe or shrink before any obstacle ; we need great activity where so much is to be accomplished, and great hope where there is so much to weary and depress. We are the purchase of a great price ; we are entrusted with a great work ; we are furnished with approved and diversified

armour and helps for our task ; exceeding great and precious promises are given unto us for our encouragement ; God and men expect us to be in advance of the world, and in advance even of our predecessors, into whose labours we have entered, and the influence of whose example is bequeathed to, and centred upon us. Thus redeemed, thus supplied, thus animated, we should be increasing in strength, expanding in capacity, and advancing in stature until we all come “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” having every grace in possession, every grace cultivated in the highest degree, and every grace in the fullest energy, and in the most strenuous activity, for the glory of Christ and the conversion of the world.

4. BUT FURTHERMORE, TO BE FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST, IS TO HAVE HOLY INFLUENCES AFFECT EVERY POWER OF THE MAN TO THE HIGHEST ATTAINMENT OF EXCELLENCE.—We may sometimes seem to ourselves to magnify the influences of the Holy Spirit when we represent Him as having a sufficiency to gratify every desire and fill every capacity of the entire man. But the thought is vain, and the conception unworthy of the wealth and grandeur of the Holy Spirit’s influences. What honour would it be to the Atlantic to say that its flood of waters could fill the winding sinuosities of a shell and satisfy the cravings of a marine insect? This allusion, though it poorly represents the amplitude and glory of the Holy Spirit’s influences, powerfully suggests the nobleness and boundlessness of man’s capacities ; for though we are less than nothing compared with the Divine fulness, we have such conceptions and comprehensiveness as no earthly ocean can satisfy—as God alone can fill.

Christians become full of Divine influence only as they are filled with "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The Church, like the moon, grows full as it is filled by the Divine fountain of light and life. It is prevented from being always full by the interposition of the world, which makes her light and glory to wane and perish. As the spirit of the world advances, the Church wanes ; as the world recedes, it waxes fuller. The Church is full of light and glory only as it is filled with the influences of the Holy Ghost. It is only as the Church is full that it represents the fulness of the Spirit, and exhibits its disk expanded and full to a dark and benighted world. And let us not forget that this fulness of the Holy Spirit relates to the entire man, whose complex character renders him susceptible not only of intellectual and moral, but of psychological or emotional and physical influences. I know we are apt to think that the Holy Spirit in training us for happiness, usefulness, and glory, influences our souls only, and not to expect Him to discipline and develop the capacities of our entire nature. But mark the comprehensive and lofty conception that inspired the prayers and doctrines of the Apostle to the Gentiles. In his supplication for the Thessalonians, he prays, "and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless." This enlarged invocation comprehends the whole man, and implores that his intellectual powers, his perceptions, his emotions, his volitions, may all be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The emotional sympathies and animal instincts, the sources and occasions of unhallowed desires and unruly passions, whether light and volatile, or morose and melancholy, are all to be moderated, subdued, and

sanctified by the mild but sovereign sway of the Heavenly Comforter. Even the body itself, with all its tendencies and operations of solids and fluids, all its appetites and propensities, are to be brought under the control and direction of the Spirit of God ; so that instead of the body being the prison of the soul, it may become its mansion—instead of being the sepulchre of Divine influences, it may become their temple. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God.” Sin does not reign in their mortal bodies, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof ; neither do they yield their members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield themselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God. The Holy Spirit so disciplines and educates the corrupt, dying, clogging bodies of good men, as to make them alive and vigorous in labours for Christ. The members of iniquity are emancipated from their thralldom, and become the laborious servants “to righteousness unto holiness.” The ears, the eyes, the hands, the feet, all the powers of conception, sensation, feeling, action, are sanctified, combined, consecrated to execute the plans and administer the charities of mercy and salvation.

5. ONCE MORE, TO BE FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST IS TO HAVE THE EMOTIONS AND ACTIONS *corresponding*, TO THE LARGEST EXTENT, WITH THE CHARACTER AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The operations of the Holy Spirit evidence themselves in right *feelings*, as well as in right *conduct*, and are manifest no less in a man’s actions than in his emotions. Men are constituted to be as much affected, and in countless instances multitudes

are as much influenced by the emotions of others as by their words and actions. At present it is a sort of canon or church rule with some to discountenance in Christians all deep-toned language of religious emotion, and repress all the symptoms of powerful feeling of the wounded and broken heart, as well as of the rejoicing spirit. But it is worthy of remark, that the inspired writers trace all irreligion to the absence of right feelings and the presence and power of bad emotions. Irreligion is described as not *liking* to retain the knowledge of God, "as *caring* for none of these things," as "*despising* the spirit of grace," as "*hardening* the heart;"—a class of images exclusive of holy emotions, but expressive of bad ones. The essence of conversion consists in the change of man's *heart*—a word universally used to express the *seat* and fountain of *emotion*—of love and hatred, of joy and sorrow, of hope and fear. The influences of the Holy Spirit benefit man only so far as they affect his heart. A religious state towards God is described as "*fear* of the Lord," "the sorrow after a godly sort," "the *love* of Christ," "the *hope* that maketh not ashamed," "the *joy* unspeakable and full of glory," "the *bowels* of mercies." These are all *emotions*, and have their natural and appropriate language to manifest their presence. In all rational pursuits, except religion, men admire feeling, fervid zeal, and even enthusiasm. What is a poet without fire? an orator without fervour? a sculptor without ardour? a musician without emotion? a patriot without feeling? When we expect obedience even in a child, it is not the mere performance of the prescribed act that we regard, but the manner in which it is done and the feeling with which it is performed. In all our actions, God looks at the heart, at the state of the emotions, and marks and

records whether that corresponds with the service offered ; and whatever splendour there may be in the service performed, and however much admired by men, if it is not accompanied by the heart and the appropriate emotion, it is unacceptable and even abhorrent to Him who searcheth the heart and judgeth not according to outward appearance. Religion claims the priority and pre-eminence in every man, in every faculty, in every power, in every affection and passion, in every appetite and propensity ; and these it will not attain until it controls all the emotions. Then the "heart burns within," and the man becomes "fervent in the spirit." It is the burning heart that bears all the sway in the soul, and marshals and influences all the energies of the mind and body. The understanding may be clear and the judgment sober, but if the heart does not burn, a man cannot be truly religious, much less filled with the Holy Spirit. He may understand that God is great, and yet fear Him not, and even blaspheme His holy name. He may understand that sin is evil, and yet live in it. He may understand that Christ is worthy of all acceptance, and yet practically reject him. It is not until the heart feels under these truths, and burns under their influences, that the actions will correspond with the character and disposition of the Holy Spirit. Religion will never become the master principle, to sanctify everyday life, to pervade every social circle, to regulate every pursuit, to subject everything to Christ, until it warms, dilates, purifies and inflames the affections and emotions of the heart.

We cannot acquire eminence and mastery in any pursuit, much less in religion, without fervour and unflinching energy. Mark the men who are described in the Scrip-

tures as "full of the Holy Ghost;" the awakening and disturbing ministrations of John the Baptist—the bold and rousing address of Peter on the day of Pentecost—the stirring appeals of Paul—the fervours of Barnabas—above all, the labours, the self-denials, the tears, the travels, the teachings, the elevation of Him who went about doing good, and who melted in pity over the sinners of Jerusalem. On the other hand, formality in religion is the name of being alive while practically dead; and lukewarmness in a church is like the heat of a corpse exposed to the sun—even its warmth is offensive—while true religion is life, moving, breathing, vigorous life, corresponding with the living influences of the Holy Spirit. We should, therefore, employ whatever means we find by experience to be adapted to excite our religious emotions. The object to be aimed at in the conversion of men is to move their affections. If in the pulpit, the Sunday-school, or the social circle, we aim only at the understanding, forgetting that a man has a heart as well as a head, and that if the latter is the seat of the thinking power, the former is the seat of the moving power—the Devil will have no apprehension of loss—this citadel of his power is not endangered—he still keeps his goods in peace. His dread, his enmity is against a religion of feeling. The affections are his strong-hold. This citadel of carnal affections must be burnt by the fire of the Holy Ghost or he will continue in undisturbed possession. The character of Christians should, therefore, correspond with the attributes of the Holy Spirit. They must yield to every impression of His seal, and conform to the entire mould of the Divine influences, in diversified aspects. Is the Spirit fire? Then should we kindle like seraphs in our religion. Is

the Spirit a well of living water? Then should every rill of thought, every current of affection, every stream of life flow in purity, in usefulness, for the irrigation of the arid waste, and for the growth and fruitfulness of every tree planted by the rivers of water. Is the Spirit a dove? Our breast should be as harmless and placid as the lake where the halcyon builds its nest and makes its home. Is the Spirit wind? Then let the whole forest of the affections and passions move before the gale. To be "full of the Holy Ghost" is to have every form and element of religious character, and every mode and degree of devout feeling, baptised and filled with the Spirit of God.

Such, my brethren, is briefly the import of the phrase, "full of the Holy Ghost," as applied to Christian experience. It is the blood-bought privilege and high vocation of every member of the Church of Christ; and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." This privilege and character seems to have been attained and exhibited in a high degree throughout his whole Christian life, by our dear departed friend Mr. Thornton, as attested by his colleagues and others who best knew him in England. During the fortnight that he was a guest in my house, I was deeply impressed with his habitual nearness to God in the whole frame and temper of his mind and spirit; with his free and reverential access to the Throne of Grace; with the exuberant and melting influences of the Holy Spirit in his devotions and conversation.

II. BUT THE PHRASE, "FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST," HAS REFERENCE TO THE SPECIAL GIFTS AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL WORK TO WHICH WE ARE CALLED, AS WELL AS TO THE STATE OF MIND IN WHICH A BELIEVER

LIVES UP TO HIS PRIVILEGE AS A MEMBER OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.—These gifts were miraculously and variously imparted to the Apostles, and many members of the primitive church. "To one was given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom ; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another, faith by the same Spirit ; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; to another, working of miracles ; to another, prophecy ; to another, discerning of spirits ; to another, divers kinds of tongues ; to another, the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." "When He ascended up on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." It appears that Barnabas possessed several of these gifts, and that in a high degree ; and in respect to these, as well as in regard to his experience, he is described as "full of the Holy Ghost."

Though some of the miraculous gifts employed in the first establishment of Christianity have not been perpetuated, and were not, even at first, marks of superior piety in those who possessed them, yet the power of the Holy Ghost has been ever manifested, as it is still, in the selection and qualifications of instruments to accomplish the work of Christ's Church. The history of the Church in all ages since apostolic times furnishes illustrations of this ; but there are certain epochs in the Church's as in the world's history, which are truly creative epochs, when intense feelings preternaturally elevate all the powers,

Such preëminently was the apostolic age ; such also was the age of the reformation ; and such the age of the great Wesleyan revival. Such, indeed, is the case wherever and whenever the Holy Spirit is poured out in the revival and extension of religion. Spiritual gifts as well as spiritual graces abound ; for, a “spiritual gift” means the faculty in which the Holy Ghost reveals Himself in each man destined for the service of the Church. That in which a man’s chief force lies is his gift. Whether a natural faculty or power sanctified and devoted, or whether a power newly developed and first made visible in conversion, is immaterial, it is equally a “spiritual gift,” if raised up and ennobled by the spiritual life in man. In times of special outpourings of the Spirit, and special trials in the Church, these spiritual gifts are more largely developed and more prominently displayed. See in the first ministers of the Church the simplicity and boldness of Peter, the persuasive tenderness of John, the glowing ardour of Stephen, the pointed sententiousness of James, the captivating eloquence of Apollos, and the argumentative power and soaring faith of Paul. Thus, in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, we see Luther and Melancthon one in mind and heart, but widely different in character and gifts. “I” says Luther, “clear the ground, and Melancthon sows the seed.” In England, the same adaptation of diversity of gifts with unity of purpose for the great work of Reformation is seen in the learning and prudence of Cranmer, the judgment and firmness of Ridley, the guileless honesty and popular eloquence of Latimer. In later, but scarcely less eventful times, we see the diversity of gifts with great grace developed and co-operating in the one divine work of reviving

religion and spreading Scriptural holiness, the active, convincing, illuminating, practical mind of John Wesley, the poetic fire and manly eloquence of Charles Wesley, the hallowed vehemence of Whitfield, the intellectual acuteness and devotional ardour of Fletcher, the quenchless zeal and indomitable perseverance of Coke ; and later still, the diversified gifts of Benson, Clarke, Sutcliffe, Watson, Bunting, Newton, and numerous others, who have nobly fought the good fight and finished their course in the home work, or as missionaries in foreign lands ; some of them men of varied learning and mighty in the Scriptures ; others Boanergeses and Apolloses in the pulpit ; others having the gift of government ; one man remarkable for intellectual, another for moral qualifications ; one highly sensitive, another firm and unimpressionable ; one having exquisite taste, another having capacity for business ; one inventive of plans of usefulness, another able and persevering to apply them, but all for the "perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Mr. Thornton did not possess the massive intellectual power and great administrative talent of Dr. Bunting, nor the philosophical grandeur and profound solemnity of Richard Watson, nor the personal attractions and popular oratory of Robert Newton ; but to talents of no common order, he added a fruitful and classic imagination and exquisite refinement of taste, large and varied literary attainments, a perennial flow of devotional feeling, a richness of scriptural and literary illustration, a masterly power of exposition and pathetic appeal, which placed him in the first rank of his ministerial brethren, and rendered him preëminently "a son of consolation" to the

subject of sorrow in multitudes of listening congregations.

In our own church in Canada, we have the same variety and adaptation in the labourers who have been selected and sent forth to explore the wilderness, to level the moral forests, to convert the vast desert-wastes of moral destitution and death into waving fields of spiritual fruitfulness and life, from which harvest after harvest has already been gathered into the heavenly garner, with the shout of "harvest home," among the toil-worn labourers who have well performed their appointed work and been crowned with their endless reward. And in our ministry still, to use the words of the princely Watson, "There are sons of thunder, and sons of consolation; teachers of first principles, and those who carry on the believer to perfection; those who flash upon the conscience, and those who allure the affections. As in nature we have the fulminating cloud and the bright sky; the gentle breeze and the resistless gale; the descending torrent and the insinuating dew; while the sun, as the ruler of the atmosphere and the lord of the seasons, tempers and directs all to form a perfect year, and cover the earth with plenteousness—so God worketh all in all." "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all."

Here suffer me to pause and make two practical remarks. The first relates to the mutual duties of those who are endowed with different gifts. The spirit of the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, portions of which I have quoted, is unity in diversity—the Church one body with

many members, adapted to different functions, to be mutually dependent, mutually sympathising, mutually co-operating, "that there should be no schism, nor division, in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." As the several members of the body have different offices, and are differently honoured, so the different gifts in the ministry of the Church qualify for different offices and services—some receiving more abundant honour than others. The duty of those possessed of the less attractive gifts is twofold—first, not to envy; secondly, not to despond. It was not the Divine intention that the hand should have the delicacy of the eye, or the foot the power of the brain, or receive equal honour; but the hand should not therefore envy the eye, nor the foot the head. On the contrary, that if one member be honoured, all the members should rejoice with it. Or, in other words, that one minister should not envy nor seek to disparage the more popular gifts of another, but rejoice in the honour done to any one member of the body as honour done to all, as we are all members one of another, and "God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him." It is enjoined, secondly, that those possessed of the less imposing and less popular gifts should not despond or complain. It is a frequent temptation to an ardent mind to be discouraged and dissatisfied with his appointed lot, believing that injustice is done to his merits, and that he could serve God and the Church better in some other situation. To every such man the Apostle speaks, telling him that although the feet are not the head,

nor the ear the eye, it is not less a part of the body—that the body cannot be all eye, all ear, all hand—that the variety of the parts is essential to the perfection of the whole, and the strength of the whole consists in the unity of the parts, and the perfect manner in which each part fulfils its functions—that it is the duty of each man to try to be himself—to try to do his own duty—that if each man had the spirit of the cross, the spirit that seeks

“To be little and unknown,
Loved and prized by God alone.”

it would not matter to him, in the strange and curious clock-work of the world, whether he were doing the work of the mainspring, or that of one of the inferior parts.

Again, the Apostle enforces a two-fold duty also on those who are gifted with a higher order of talents—that of *humility* and *sympathy*. They were not to despise their less gifted brethren. As in the natural body the rudest parts are the most useful, and the delicate parts require most care ; as in the body politic, what are called the menial trades and employments are the most necessary, since a nation can exist without an astronomer or philosopher, but not exist without the day-labourer ; so the Church may do without the brilliant orator, but not without the laborious evangelist and pastor. The musician and artist may be dispensed with—as luxuries not essential to our existence—but we cannot exist without the wood-chopper and the ploughman.

Then there is the duty of sympathy as well as of humility on the part of the more honoured members of the body. The life of Christ pervades every member of His body, the Church ; and the law of that life is sympathy,

as St. Paul expresses it in the 26th verse: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."

My second practical remark is, the lesson taught by St. Paul in the 13th chapter of Corinthians in continuation of the 12th—to distinguish carefully between gifts and graces. Both are of God; both are even to be coveted; but to the grace of *love*, with its train of heavenly virtues, the tongues of men and of angels, and the gifts of prophecy, of vast knowledge, of mighty faith, of martyr heroism, of boundless liberality, are as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. A man of eloquence, learning, skill, may be a good man; but he may also be proud, mean, obstinate, selfish. Gifts are what a man *has*, graces are what he *is*. We may admire the gifts, and yet despise the possessor of them; but we must ever honour and press to our hearts the man who is filled with the grace that "suffereth long and is kind," that "envieth not," that "vaunteth not itself," is "not puffed up, becometh not itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, endureth all things, hopeth all things, never faileth."

Let us, my brethren, "desire spiritual gifts," and "covet earnestly the best gifts"—that is, pray, study, labour, contend for them; and especially those gifts which are best—that is, which are most useful, which will tend to comfort most hearts, save most souls, bring most glory to God; but let us ever do so in connexion with the more excellent way of love—the image of God in the soul of man, the balm of earth, the essence of heaven.

III. THE LAST PARTICULAR MENTIONED IN THE CHARACTER OF AN APOSTOLIC MINISTER IS, THAT HE "WAS

FULL OF FAITH." Now as faith in general is reliance upon testimony, and respects solely the veracity and ability of the testifier; so the faith which constitutes a man a believer before God, and which qualifies him for God's work, is simple and absolute reliance upon God's word, on the single ground that He is a God that cannot lie and is able to perform what He has promised. It is naked trust in the Divine veracity and power irrespective of human probabilities, and against all human probabilities. It was without, above, and even against any process of reasoning, and against all human probability, that Abraham should have a seed, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. But God promised it, and Abraham believed Him; and on the testimony of his covenant-God alone he acted—believed God in hope and against hope, and it was counted to him for righteousness, and procured him the appellation of the father of the faithful. Thus Paul was assured by a messenger of God that not a soul on board the foundering ship would be lost. Paul believed it, though the howling winds, the surging waves, the crumbling vessel declared speedy destruction; and according to the faith of Paul all were saved. Thus the sinner, crushed beneath the weight of guilt and sin, relies for pardon and salvation upon Christ alone, who has promised to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, and the guilty, helpless, miserable sinner is pardoned, is ingrafted into Christ, and becomes a partaker of the life and glory of Christ. Thus the minister of Christ—the Barnabas who is full of faith—having rested on Christ alone for his personal salvation—having felt the power of it in his own experience of pardon, of a new life, of spiritual illumination, of zeal for the

Divine glory, and of compassion for a world lying in the wicked one; believing beyond a doubt that the truth which he has embraced and the cause which he has espoused is of God, and that God will grant to him every needful degree of strength, light, and comfort for the work to which He has called him, shield the Church by His protection, enrich and perpetuate it by His blessing; he is not moved by any danger, is not deterred by any foe, is not discouraged by any obstacles, is not wearied in any labour. He embraces the whole promise and revelation of God with the tenacity of life itself. He is filled with it—his understanding, his conscience, his will, his affections, all rest on the testimony of God who cannot lie, and for the fulfilment of whose every word he looks with the certainty of a realized fact—his faith being the substance, or subsistence, of things hoped for, and the evidence, or demonstration, of things not seen.

It was thus that Barnabas, "full of faith," enduring like Moses, as seeing Him who is invisible, was qualified to animate and encourage the infant Church at Antioch to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. The tenderness of his heart, the intrepidity of his spirit, the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the mighty faith with which he was filled, all fitted him for the varied offices of a nursing father to new born babes in Christ, a son of consolation to the afflicted and distressed, a preacher of the unsearchable riches of Christ, a leader of the Lord's hosts against error, ignorance and sin.

In all that has been said in reference to our departed President Thornton, as well as from my own brief acquaintance with him, no feature of his character was more apparent than his unwavering confidence in the God

whom he served, and his entire faith in the doctrines, and promises, and assured triumphs of the Gospel which he preached. His religious experience appears never to have undergone an eclipse, but to have been as a "shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." He seems never to have wavered in his profession of faith and doctrine, but, as he advanced in experience and years, to have increased in the riches of the full assurance of faith and understanding unto the end.

I ought not in conclusion to omit the more specific mention of some characteristics of Mr. Thornton and his ministry.

1. THOUGH HE WAS BY NO MEANS UNATTRACTIVE IN HIS PERSON, HE HAD NOT THE PHYSICAL ADVANTAGES WHICH INVESTED RICHARD WATSON WITH SUCH MAJESTY, AND DR. BUNTING WITH SUCH AUTHORITY, AND DR. NEWTON WITH SUCH CHARMS, BUT HE HAD THAT WHICH IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL TRUE GREATNESS, and which will always command attention and respect—strong vigorous sense—what the great Locke calls, "large, sound, round-about sense," and was therefore distinguished for just thinking, powerful reasoning, practical and pungent addresses to the understanding, the conscience and the heart.

2. HE WAS A MAN OF DEEP PIETY—evincing to all with whom he had intercourse that he was not merely a moral, an amiable, a gifted, a learned, a serious-minded man, but a truly converted, a regenerated man—not having a shadow of doubt of it in his own mind, and leaving not the slightest doubt of it in the minds of others—living in habitual and intimate communion with the "general assembly of the Church of the first born, with the spirits of the just

made perfect, and with the God the Judge of all, and with Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant," having no doubt of the system of truth which he preached, and fully believing that God would bless it to the saving of the world.

3. HE WAS A DILIGENT STUDENT OF THE BIBLE ; and that not merely as a scholar and a theologian to settle doubtful questions of criticism and investigate great systems of doctrine, but as a travelling pilgrim, daily drinking from the perennial springs of ever fresh and ever living truths from heaven, ever instinct with life, ever creating rich verdure where they flow ; as the toiling labourer, who renews his strength not by the choicest produce of human skill, but by the bread which comes down from heaven, by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord ; as the humble disciple who learns his daily lessons not from the pages of some theological Gamaliel or some eloquent Massillon, but from the words of Him who spake as never man spake, and of those who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise ; and it is thus daily walking with the holy prophets and apostles, and with their and our Lord and Master, that we imbibe their spirit and imitate their example.

4. HE WAS A MAN OF UNFLAGGING INDUSTRY. He was a strict economist of time, and he valued it more than gold. His hours of protracted labour, and the vast amount of work he performed, were the theme of remark by his colleagues and associates, and often excited their surprise. He felt that, not only by obligation, but by solemn ministerial vows, his time and strength had been consecrated to Christ and His Church, and that idleness was a violation of this two-fold compact. He was, there-

fore, instant in season and out of season to fulfil his engagements and to finish the work which had been given him to do.

5. HE WAS A MAN OF CAREFUL PREPARATION FOR HIS PUBLIC DUTIES. Though he possessed great extemporaneous resources, his sermons and addresses bore marks of having been prepared with great care, and that care not less devotional than intellectual. The Rev. Samuel Davies, President of the College of New Jersey a century since, is said to have declared that "every discourse of his, which he thought worthy of the name of a sermon, cost him four days' hard study in the preparation." It is not surprising, therefore, that nearly more than fifty editions of Davies' sermons have been printed, and that they have been stereotyped in both Europe and America. I doubt not but Mr. Thornton's discourses were prepared with equal labour and devotion, and hence their effective power and great value.

6. HE WAS NOT LESS REMARKABLE FOR HIS CAREFUL PREPARATIONS FOR PUBLIC DUTIES THAN FOR HIS ZEAL AND ARDOUR IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEM. He was ever ready to work even beyond his strength; and all the powers and sympathies of his soul breathed in his fervent and copious prayers, and in the burning thoughts and words of his discourses. He might well say with Baxter,

"I preach as I ne'er shall preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men."

7. IT IS NOT SURPRISING, THEREFORE, THAT HE WAS AN EARNEST ADVOCATE AND PROMOTER OF REVIVALS OF RELIGION. No feature of his prayers and discourses was more prominent than his imploring, and urging to seek

the influences of the Holy Spirit to sanctify and anoint ministers and people, to convince, convert and save sinners, and that now, and by multitudes. All his sympathies, and aspirations, and exertions were directed to the revival and extension of personal and family religion, and recognized the present manifestations and reception of the Gospel, as in ancient days, "in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

8. HE THEREFORE DELIGHTED IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION, AND URGED IT ON ALL OCCASIONS AND WITH GREAT FERVENCY AND AFFECTION. The class-meeting was a place of weekly resort and of hallowed delight to him during all the years of his numerous public labours, and that testing, refreshing means of grace, as well as the love-feast, he commended with the sympathetic earnestness of personal experience as well as from conviction of public duty.

9. BUT HIS SYMPATHIES WERE AS EXPRESSIVE AS THEY WERE WARM AND SPIRITUAL, AND HIS VIEWS WERE AS ENLARGED AS THEY WERE LUMINOUS AND DEVOUT. He looked upon the conversion of the world in the economy and purpose of God, with as much certainty as the conversion of an individual, and advocated, therefore, with melting pathos and ceaseless perseverance, the extension of missions and the preaching of the Gospel to every creature.

10. I WILL ONLY ADD, THAT HE WAS PRE-EMINENTLY A MAN OF PEACE, OF EXPANSIVE CHARITY, OF WORLD-WIDE SYMPATHIES. He seems to have had no enemies but ignorance and vice, and he was truly the "friend of all and the enemy of none." He enjoyed the esteem and fellowship of Christian brethren among the good as well

as great men of all evangelical churches ; and during his visit to the United States and Canada, his fine poetic imagination, his wonderful resources of rich Scriptural imagery and historical illustration, were taxed to their utmost to give expression to the joyous and grateful feelings of his noble heart. When standing in the presence of the American and Canadian Conferences, he beheld the representatives of a work of God which, in a century, had increased from a single company in a rigging loft in New York, less numerous than that assembled in an upper room at Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost, to as many thousands of ministers and as many hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of church members as were probably gathered into the Church itself during the first century of its existence—causing “the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad for them, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose,” over a territory far more extensive than all Europe together with the Asia of ancient civilization.

My Christian brethren, may the mantle of our departed President Thornton fall on us like the mantle of ascending Elijah upon the praying Elisha ! May we be animated by his example, and warned by his sudden removal, to have our lamps trimmed and burning, to be instant in season and out of season, “always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know (and blessed be God for the knowledge !) that our labour is not in vain in the Lord !”



CHRISTIANS ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN.

SERMON III.

By REV. E. RYERSON, D.D., CHIEF SUPERIN-
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“The spirits of just men made perfect.”—HEB. xii. 23.



WO things, my brethren, are fearfully certain, and one thing is awfully uncertain, in respect to our future destiny. It is certain that we shall all die. The sentence of death is stamped upon our physical constitution ; it is written in the decrees of Providence ; and it will soon be executed upon every individual in this assembly. It is also certain that we shall all be judged for our conduct in this life. It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after death the judgment*. As certain as there is a moral government—as there is a Supreme Being of moral perfections—as man has intellectual and moral faculties and a power of volition ; so certain is it that he will be hereafter judged according to the deeds done in the body. Our individual history is written in the book of God’s remembrance ; that history records thoughts as

well as words, motives as well as actions ; and God has appointed a day in which He will judge us out of those things written in His book. The darkness is as the light to Him ; and every secret thing, however perpetrated in the loneliness of retirement or under the mantle of midnight, will be brought into judgment. But while death and judgment are certain to us all, the *time* of our death and judgment is awfully *uncertain*. No age, rank, or condition is exempt from the shafts of death ; nor is there any rule or physiological development by which we can calculate the period of our future earthly existence. It often happens that the most robust and healthy member of a family is cut down, while the life of the comparatively feeble is protracted for many years. And so in this assembly, perhaps the very person whose appearance gives the strongest promise of many days and long life on earth, who is forming the largest schemes of future enterprise, and indulging the strongest hopes of future success and enjoyment, may, at this very moment, be the unconscious victim of incipient disease, and be destined to be the first borne to the sepulchre of the dead. We know not what a day shall bring forth. In the midst of life we are in death.

It becomes each of us then to live in a state of daily preparation either for life or for death. And let it be impressed upon our minds, that the best preparation for death is the best fitness for life ; that the best meetness for entering into the society of heaven, is the best qualification for performing our duties to the society of earth ; that when we possess the mind which was in Christ, when “our conversation is in heaven,” and “our life hid with Christ in God,” then we are best adapted to perform every

part of our appointed work here and do the will of God on earth as angels do it in heaven. The spirit of true religion is the spirit of heaven—is the reflection of its purity and benevolence ; and this life is the apprenticeship of heavenly knowledge and employment.

Such is the object of this discourse ; and I know not how I can better aid in accomplishing its purpose than by directing our united attention to the characteristic developments of true religion in the persons of its disciples both on earth and in heaven—the former for our guidance, the latter for our comfort and encouragement ; *just men*, and the spirits of just men made *perfect*.

The passage (see verses 22, 23, 24), of which our text is a part, contains the summary of the argument of this whole epistle—the superiority of the dispensation of the gospel over every preceding dispensation ; and the lofty and majestic figures of this passage are only excelled by the overwhelming grandeur and sublimity of the truths which it unfolds. Here no new religion is taught, but the most perfect dispensation of the first and the only true religion. Here the infinite benignity of God on Mount Zion is presented in inviting contrast with His unpropitiated majesty on Mount Sinai. Here Jesus with the new covenant and blood of sprinkling is exhibited in the place of Moses and the thunders and the lightnings and the tempest and the thick darkness of the burning mountain. Here, instead of being the trembling spectators of terror and of death, and the isolated occupants of a temporary habitation, believers are represented as denizens of a heavenly city—forming a part of a general assembly, privileged, sanctified, and consecrated to God as the first-born—attended by an innumerable company of angels—

governed and rewarded by God the Judge of all through Jesus the Mediator—and associated with the spirits of the just men made perfect—those first trophies of Redeeming grace, and brightest gems in the diadem of Mediatorial splendour; who had “through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings—yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. *Of whom the world was not worthy.*”

It is to the spirits of these just men made perfect that the Apostle appears chiefly to refer in the text. They are called *just* or *righteous*, expressive of their relation and character on earth; they are represented as *made perfect*, indicative of their state and character in heaven; the two topics of our present discourse.

I. THEY ARE CALLED JUST OR RIGHTEOUS. This includes three things:—the justification of their persons—the rectitude of their nature—the purity of their lives.

1. *These men being just or righteous implies the justification of their persons.* They were once sinners—were by nature children of wrath even as others,—and were also guilty of the practice of sin and subject to its condemna-

tion of death. This is the sentence of our race. "Death has passed upon all men, for all have sinned." These just were therefore once unjust; these righteous were once unrighteous; and in themselves and of themselves, they stood in the same relation and were under the same penalty with you and with me and all other sinners of mankind. How, then, were they made righteous? How were they made just, or justified from all things written in the law against them? Not by the law; for law cannot, in its nature, admit of pardon. Not by works of the law; for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. But they were made righteous through the merits of Him who is the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." God "hath sent forth His Son, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "He hath made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." The sacrifice of Christ is the price of our redemption; and the value of that price is commensurate with the guilt of the whole human race. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*." "All we like sheep have gone astray: and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of *us all*." The spirit of every just person in heaven owes his deliverance from the curse of the law to the obedience of Christ. The Church on earth and in heaven is the purchase of His blood. The death of Christ is the life of the world.

But it does not follow that because Jesus Christ "tasted death for every man," every man will therefore be saved. The Saviour must be *received* as well as provided; the

medicine must be taken as well as prepared, in order to cure ; uneaten food will not nourish ; the bread from heaven gives life only to those that eat it. “ He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved ; he that believeth not shall be damned.” As there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved but the name of Jesus, so *faith in His name* is the only way of being saved by Him. “ Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness ;” and the spirits of all the just persons in heaven were made righteous in the same way—the divinely appointed way of justification by faith.

What then is involved in that faith on account of which we are accounted just or righteous before God ? To depend upon Christ for deliverance from the wrath to come clearly supposes a consciousness of danger ; and to rely upon Him for the pardon of sin necessarily implies a sense of guilt. Hence alarm, disquietude, and sorrow for sin ; hence the penitent exclamation in the Liturgy of the Church of England, “ The remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us, and the burthen of them is intolerable ”—language expressive of the most poignant grief of heart and the deepest oppression of spirit ; and hence earnest and importunate seeking of deliverance from anguish so distressing and a burthen so intolerable. The intensity and bitterness of penitential sorrow, produced by this incipient work of the Holy Spirit in “ convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come,” differ in degree and mode of expression according to constitutional temperament, diversity of circumstances, and the purposes of sovereign grace. In some instances the heart is gently opened like that of Lydia ; or gradually prepared

like those of Cornelius and the Ethiopian Treasurer ; or suddenly pricked under the divinely anointed preaching of the word, like the three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost ; or seized with the deepest anguish through the instrumentality of some remarkable Providence, like the persecuting Saul and the Philippian Gaoler. But whatever diversity there may be in the circumstances or instrumentality of this preparatory part of the work of justification by faith, it is the “ manifestation of the same Spirit given to each to profit withal ; ” it is in all the same discovery of danger, the same consciousness of guilt, the same contrition of spirit, the same renunciation of sin, the same inquiry after the way of salvation, the same fleeing for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel, the same exclusive reliance upon the merits of Christ as the ground of acceptance with God. Though all justified persons may not have experienced an equal degree of that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of ; yet all have experienced such a degree of it as to feel sin to be their burden and their ruin—to groan for deliverance from its bondage—to be willing to give up all for the righteousness of Christ ; to be saved in God’s own appointed way. And when they were thus disposed and enabled to renounce all dependence upon themselves or their works, to forsake every lying vanity, to rely upon the sacrifice of their great High Priest alone for pardon and acceptance with God, then did they obtain “ redemption in His blood even the forgiveness of sin.” “ Being justified by faith, they had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Their condemnation was succeeded by pardon, and their sorrow by joy ; the spirit of bondage was followed by the

spirit of adoption ; and the depressing fears of the condemned sinner were exchanged for the grateful emotions of the justified believer.

It is thus that man becomes just with God ; it is thus the spirits made perfect in heaven become “just men” on earth ; and whosoever shall attempt to climb up any other way will be treated as a thief or a robber. But their being just or righteous includes,

2. *The rectitude of their natures.* They were the subjects of a *real* as well as *relative* change ; for they were sinful by nature, as well as sinners by practice. They were born in sin—were dead in trespasses and sins—were without inward holiness as well as outward righteousness. We may sometimes be inclined to the impression that the just persons mentioned in the Scriptures—the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles—were of a better moral constitution by nature than ourselves or than the rest of mankind. But they inherited the same corrupt nature—were subjects of the same moral weakness and depravity—men of like passions with ourselves. Sin is the disease of our nature as well as the crime of our race. Its corruption pervades all the powers of the soul, and taints the very imaginations of the thoughts of the heart. It envelops our minds in darkness ; it inflames our hearts with enmity ; it pollutes all the streams of thought, of feeling, and of action. There is neither strength nor soundness in any part of man’s moral constitution. “The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint ;” and the wounds and bruises and putrifying sores of sin extend from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. In the flesh—that is the unrenewed nature—of the spirits of the just made perfect, there dwelt no good thing, any

more than in that of other men ; but as they were pardoned, so were they adopted and made children of God by faith in Jesus Christ ; were made *new* men in order to being made perfect men—created anew after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. Their understandings were enlightened to see the evil of sin and the necessity and excellence of holiness ; their consciences were quickened from slumbering insensibility to a lively attestation of the truth ; their wills were brought from obstinate hostility to ready obedience ; and their desires and affections, their hopes and their joys, were transferred from things earthly and sinful to things divine and eternal.

Such a change is widely and essentially different from the results of natural amiableness of disposition, educational training, or intellectual refinement. The young man in the Gospel who had outwardly “ kept all the commandments from his youth up,” and Saul of Tarsus who was throughout his early life “ blameless touching the righteousness of the law,” lacked the essential element of this great inward transformation from “ darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God,” as much as the grossest publicans and sinners. It is the gift of grace, and not the production of nature ; it is the work of the Spirit of God in the soul, and not the influence of one human mind over another ; it is the divine creation of light and love where none existed, and not the mere growth of intellectual and social culture. “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh ”—is sinful, unholy, depraved—however educated and refined ; and “ that which is born of the spirit is spirit ”—partakes of the holiness of the Spirit by whose agency it is begotten—whatever may have been its previous state and character. To be in

Christ—to belong to Him, to believe in Him, to be a Christian—is identical with being the subject of a new creation. “If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature,” or it is a new creation; “old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.”

In this new birth—this spiritual resurrection with Christ—this “renewing of the Holy Ghost”—we have the foundation of filial confidence and affection, the elements of Christian character and enjoyment, the vital springs of religious devotion and activity. “Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.” “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” The life of Christ becomes our life. “Christ lives within us; and the life we live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God.” Our hearts are made the temples of the Holy Ghost. God walks and dwells in us, and manifests Himself unto us as He does not unto the world. Where God dwells by the light and power of His Spirit, there must be peace, joy, and love; and that love is stronger than any earthly affection. This is the philosophy of inward, experimental, practical Christianity; this was the power which enabled those just persons “of whom the world was not worthy,” to endure privations and sufferings, the very recital of which thrills the mind with horror; this was the mysterious energy which filled the heart of the Primitive Church, and prompted its members to such works of faith and labours of love; this is “the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost,” which is the characteristic and privilege of all true Christians, and which develops itself in corresponding affection for God’s people, in earnest desires and efforts to promote

His glory, and in a holy delight in the divine word and ordinances. Such is the spirit of adoption, the spirit of the new creation in Christ Jesus—that rectitude of their natures which constituted the internal character of the “just men” of our text. But their being just implies—

3. *The purity of their lives.* The root of faith produces the fruit of holiness. They were not only pardoned and adopted, but were “*sanctified* by faith which was in Christ.” Their union with Him produced conformity to Him. The law of God written in their hearts produced obedience to that law in their lives. Being born of the Spirit, they lived after the Spirit, and thus fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and obtained the appellation of just or righteous; for “he that doeth righteousness is righteous.” The quality of the fruit corresponds with the character of the tree. The life is the development of the heart. Badness of life cannot be associated with goodness of heart. A pure fountain cannot send forth a polluted stream. When the heart is renewed, the life will be reformed. When Christ is enthroned in the heart, He will reign in the life. “God is *light*” and “God is *love*,” those who “dwell in God and He in them,” will therefore be *holy* and *merciful*. This is the spring and principle of all true morality. It originates in God; it consists in the love of God; it acts in obedience to God. “Love is obedience in the heart; obedience is love in the life.” Hence “this is the love of God, that ye keep His commandments.” There is no love of God without keeping His commandments; neither is there any keeping of the commandments without the love of God. Morality is therefore the offspring of religion; religion is the life of God in the soul of man—the “love of God

shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us ;” and the true manifestation of that life and that love is in the gift and person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our *sanctification* as well as righteousness. He is the source of purity as well as of pardon. His blood not only redeems us from the condemnation of sin, but “cleanses us from all sin” itself ; and the spirits of just men made perfect ascribe to Him all the glory of their being “*washed* from their sins in His own blood.”

We here see the inseparable connexion between the new heart and the new life—between the love of Christ in the heart and the holiness of Christ in the life. We also see the difference between the principle and peculiar character of Scriptural holiness or morality and the ethics of heathenism or human philosophy. The principle of the one is love ; the principle of the other is fear. In the one the love of God is everything ; in the other it is nothing. The former extends to the motives and latent springs of actions ; the latter is limited to the actions themselves. The former is the instinctive working of a renewed nature, the practical expression of the “law of God written in the heart,” and is therefore the perfect “law of liberty ;” the latter is a system of restraints for conventional purposes, without authority or life, and which leaves both its teachers and disciples “servants of corruption, while they promise themselves liberty.” The one is God working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure ; the other is the Leopard labouring to change his spots, and the Ethiopian his skin.

Thus, purity of life—embracing the whole circle of Christian virtues—is the emanation of purity of heart ; and in proportion to our inward rectitude will be our out-

ward obedience. When the heart is perfectly renewed "in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness," then will we esteem "*all* His precepts in *all* things to be *right*." When we love God with all our hearts, then will we serve Him with all our strength. The "just men" of our text were therefore "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke"—walking in all the commandments of God and shining as lights in the world. They "wrought righteousness" in the largest sense, as the business of their lives, as the principles and spirit of it had been wrought in their hearts. They worshipped God ; they revered and honoured His sanctuary ; they loved and obeyed His word ; they sought and promoted His glory ; they cultivated the spirit of peace, of brotherly kindness and charity, and did good unto all men as they had opportunity and ability. They were the workmanship of God and His witnesses ; and so are all true believers. They have been created "anew in Christ Jesus unto good works," and their works delightfully correspond with the character of their new creation—"having their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

II. THEIR PERFECTION IS NOT ABSOLUTE—so as to admit of no increase or degrees. God alone is absolutely perfect. Absolute perfection is an attribute of infinity. No finite being can be absolutely perfect any more than he can be infinite. The import of the term "perfect" must, therefore, be limited by the condition and nature of that to which it is applied. The works of nature are perfect ; but theirs is a *natural* perfection. They do not possess intellectual or moral powers ; they are therefore incapable of an intellectual or moral perfection. Now, the perfection of the spirits of the just in heaven is adapted

to their state and character, and implies a completeness of that security and of those intellectual and moral qualities, qualifications and pleasures which they possessed and enjoyed in an imperfect degree on earth.

1. *They are made perfect in their physical and intellectual powers.* I here speak not merely of happy disembodied spirits, but of saints glorified in both body and soul in heaven. Their natural bodies were feeble, decaying, dying bodies—the subjects of various diseases and of speedy dissolution. After the close of the service in Montreal on last Sabbath evening, I was informed that a gentleman at the door of the vestry wished to speak to me. I there met an old man bowed down with weakness, palsied in every limb, and leaning upon the arm of another. He reached out his trembling hand, and in a feeble, tremulous voice saluted me. I told him I did not recollect him; he feebly replied, “LUSHER.” I was affected to see the once accomplished and able Preacher of the Gospel (Rev. Robert L. Lusher) a shattered wreck of what he was when I had previously seen him in the day of his vigour and power, and I could but give utterance to the first impression of my mind—“Sir, your present weakness will soon be turned into strength.” Yes, my brethren, ministers and their wives, no less than others, are subjects of feebleness, sickness and death. By what I feel in myself, I am reminded that I must soon go the way of my fathers, and that the shortness of the time to work here requires promptitude and diligence. But how elevating and delightful is the thought, that though the body is sown in corruption it shall be raised in incorruption, and shall therefore be incapable of dissolution, or the weakness, the wrinkles or locks of decrepitude and age; that though

sown in dishonour, this "vile body" shall be raised in glory "fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself;" that though sown a mortal body, it shall "put on immortality," and therefore be insusceptible of death—death itself being "swallowed up in victory;" that though "sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power"—a power how great we cannot now comprehend—a power adapted to the varied and ceaseless employments of immortality—a power "equal to the angels." Ah! how different did the body of Moses appear when he was trembling at the base of Mount Sinai, and the body of Elijah when he was fleeing from the face of Ahab, and when they appeared with the transfigured Saviour many ages afterwards—their bodies radiant with celestial glory—floating in the atmosphere—visible and invisible at pleasure—and descending from, and ascending to, heaven with inconceivably more swiftness than the sunbeams, and with as much ease as swiftness. When we think of the weakness and decay of our own bodies, or look on the crumbling dust of departed friends, how consoling and refreshing is the thought, how glorious is the revealed truth, and how unspeakably blessed does the work of redemption appear, which transforms the king of terrors into a messenger of love, and converts our bodily infirmities and death into the precursors of immortal youth and unfading beauty.

But the *intellectual powers* of the saints in heaven experience a proportionable change and elevation with the powers of their mortal bodies. Their *understandings* are enlarged in comprehension like those of the mighty angels who do his pleasure; their *wills* are perfected in submis-

sion like those of the cherubim who bow before the throne; their *affections* and *passions* and *propensities* are transformed and adapted to the objects of their happiness and to the illimitable range of their pleasures and employments. How different was the mental development of BACON and NEWTON when they were on their mother's knees, and when the one was making the circle of the sciences and the other measuring the distances of the heavenly bodies and explaining the laws of their motions! How different were the intellectual powers of JOHN WESLEY when, in infancy, he was rescued from the devouring flames which enveloped the parental habitation, and when he had expounded the whole system of doctrinal and experimental theology and preached the gospel for half a century! So great is the difference between the powers of the mightiest intellects on earth and those of the "spirits of the just *made perfect*." And in proportion to the vastness of their intellectual powers, will be the extent and degree of their attainments; which leads me to remark that—

2. *Theirs is a perfection of knowledge*—not of absolute attainment, but of immeasurable increase. Much of the happiness of heaven consists in contemplation, the supreme and infinite object of which is GOD Himself. It is the way, and will be one chief employment of life eternal, "to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." In what a moment of time after their admission into heaven, do they attain more knowledge than they can here acquire during a long life of laborious application. Their knowledge is more *immediate* and *intuitive* than it was on earth. It is not by cautious and laboured *inference* from the works of God; nor by *narration* from His revealed truth; but it is a knowledge derived from the *sight* of God

Himself, and therefore as superior to the *knowledge of nature* or the *knowledge of grace*, as the lustre of the meridian sun is to the glimmering twilight of the morning. The "spirits of the just made perfect" see God as He is, in the unclouded splendour of His infinite majesty and glory. Vision absorbs conjecture, reasoning and faith; and dispels imperfection, doubt and error. The perceptions and knowledge of even prophets and apostles on earth bear no comparison with the visions of the heavenly world. St. Paul, with all his mighty intellectual powers and celestial inspiration, says, "now we see through a glass darkly,"—our organs of vision are weak, the medium of observation is obscure, the discovery of objects is at best defective and imperfect; but, "then we shall see face to face"—an object which the divine Moses himself could not behold on earth and live—a view which "the spirits of the just *made perfect*" alone can bear—the superseding of every means of representation by similitude or revelation—the direct, steady, unclouded, intuitive view of the presence of God. "Now (continues the Apostle) I know in part"—with all the visions and gifts vouchsafed to me concerning the dispensations of the law and gospel, I know but in part the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of their riches and wisdom; but when that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part shall be done away, "then shall I know even as also I am known;"—shall know for myself, and not by the testimony of another, even of an angel—shall know by intuition and not by reasoning or inference—shall know perfectly, and therefore not be liable to error or mistake—shall know beatifically, and therefore be as the angels of God. The Apostle describes the difference between the knowledge

of earth and heaven, as the difference between the narrow, the confined, the imperfect notions of childhood and the more clear, comprehensive and rational views of full-grown men. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child ; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." As men of ripened and matured understandings rise above and relinquish the thoughts and notions of infancy and childhood ; so, when we attain to the maturity of the "spirits of the just made perfect," our present views and gifts and knowledge will appear as the thoughts and lisplings of infancy. "For now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face ; now we know in part ; but then shall we know even as also we are known."

The spirits of our friends made perfect in heaven possess more extensive knowledge of the glorious perfections of GOD than they possessed or ever could have acquired on earth ; His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His justice, His holiness, His faithfulness, His unchangeableness, His boundless presence. What subjects of contemplation, adoration, and praise ! "They behold His face in righteousness ;" they "see Him as He is." Proportionably increased, and increasing, is their *knowledge of the person and glories of their blessed Saviour*, together with the character and offices of the Holy Ghost. Being "absent from the body, they are *present with their Lord*," where they *behold* the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and the added glories of His mediatorial triumphs—the object of profoundest wonder and admiration to the whole heavenly world, the loftiest theme of its universal and ceaseless praises. They also survey and contemplate the *works of God*. And as they

pass from world to world and gaze upon the glories of God's unbounded empire, what a universe of wonders rises before the view, throughout the universal firmament of planets, suns and systems, throughout the endless varieties and beauties of the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, throughout all orders of animated nature from the microscopic animalcule to the mightiest archangel. Those great and laborious astronomers, Sir WILLIAM and JOHN HERSCHEL—the father and son—toiled out the nights of many years to make a telescopic survey of the starry heavens, from the northern and southern hemisphere of our own planet, and they have excited much admiration and applause for their observations and discoveries; but how little could they see, and how much less could they know, of the works of God throughout the amplitudes of space. But celestial vision unmeasurably outreaches the limits of telescopic observation, and celestial wings inconceivably outfly the rapidity of the solar light, and celestial minds know, in a moment, more of the “heavens which declare the glory of God and the firmament which showeth His handy work,” than human philosophy has ever conceived during a period of six thousand years. “The works of the Lord are great, honourable and glorious, sought of all them that have pleasure therein.” And how clear and comprehensive is the knowledge which the “spirits of the just made perfect possess of the *providential government* of God—His dispensations towards the various orders of intelligent beings that people the universe—the rise and fall of empires and kingdoms, of nations and tribes in our own world—the mysteries of sin and redemption—the methods of His revelation—the reasons of His dealings with families and individuals—in short, the

whole range of His administration from the morning of the creation to the morning of the resurrection. All will be open to their view, not as a history, but as one vast field of vision ; they *see* the end from the beginning, and trace every link in the chain of Providence which connects every event of time with the throne of God and the developments of eternity. The clouds and darkness which now envelop the operations of Providence, will not obscure the horizon of the heavenly inhabitants ; they will see with the eye of undeceiving survey that “righteousness and judgment were the habitation of His throne” as much when He was visiting His people with poverty and sickness and death, as when He was bestowing upon them riches and health and life. They will see more ; they will see what now confounds reason and almost staggers faith, that the comparatively light and temporary afflictions of this life are transmuted into unspeakable and endless blessings to “the spirits of the just made perfect”—even into a “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” The disclosure of the reasons of the time and place and circumstances of our birth, and of every disappointment and trial of our present state, will furnish new and affecting manifestations of wisdom and goodness in the administration of the divine government, and call forth new songs of gratitude and praise to Him that “doeth all things well.” The most inexplicable and apparently accidental events of time will then be seen to have been essential and carefully adjusted parts of a great system of Almighty wisdom and goodness, and as perfectly adapted to the glorious end designed, as are the organs of sight to the objects of sight, or the law of gravitation to the motions of the heavenly bodies. What wondrous vision ! What amazing

discoveries ! What “excellency of knowledge !” And that knowledge ever expanding—ever accumulating without labour—ever approximating the infinite God, and yet ever at an infinite distance from the exhaustless resources of His attributes and perfections. The Lord God is their Sun ; they see light in His light and become luminous themselves in the beams of His glory.

3. *Theirs is, therefore, a perfection of holiness.* Their vision of God is transforming. They see God as He is, they are like Him. Even on earth their sight of God *by faith* exerted a transforming influence. “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, they were changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” They thus became the children of light ;—partaking of its pure qualities and diffusing its warming and fertilizing influence—their lives, like the countenance of Moses, reflecting the glory of the Lord. But the influence of *sight* is more powerful than that of *faith*. The spirits of the just made perfect *see* God ; and their perfect vision of Him makes their likeness to Him complete. “Every such spirit (says the great JOHN HOWE) is become as it were an orb of purest, most operative and lively light, an intellectual and self-actuating sun, full of fervour and motive power.” The sun, indeed, with all his glory, is not free from spots ; but the spirits of the just made perfect are “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Their natures are as pure as their robes of white, and transparent as the light itself. Every act, every word, every thought, every motion is holy ; and therefore the inhabitants are perfectly holy. They love God and each other with an intenseness of affection of which they were incapable on earth. Their thoughts never wander ; their

affections never languish ; their love never declines. Blessed beings ! Glorious place ! Pride and envy are not known there ; nor selfishness nor resentment ; nor malice nor slander ; nor divisions nor discord. They are holy as God is holy ; and like Him they are *one*. One motive, one affection, one object actuates them all, as one holiness pervades them all. And this holiness—so entire and complete—is absolutely necessary to their happiness.

Where there is sin there must be misery. Pride, hatred, envy, revenge, or covetousness, cannot exist without producing misery. Holiness is the perfection of order—the perfection of moral health and beauty, and therefore the essential element of happiness. Without holiness—a perfect rectitude and healthfulness in all the powers and passions of the soul—the external splendours of heaven itself could no more impart happiness, than a diadem can satisfy an aching head, or splendid apparel can give pleasure to a disordered body. But the injected beams of the divine glory transform the spirits of the just into the perfect beauty of holiness—impressing the perfection of order, harmony and purity upon all their intellectual and moral powers ; whilst His wisdom, benevolence and power spread out before them the landscapes of boundless space, and the riches of His own eternity.

4. *Finally, the spirits of the just are made perfect in exalted and complete felicity.* There is the absence of all evil, and the presence of all good—the one excluding suffering and sorrow, the other producing perfect pleasure and enjoyment. The bodies of the saints are spiritualized and glorified in heaven ; there are therefore no lusts of the flesh there. Their souls are perfectly holy ; they therefore feel no lusts of the mind. Fallen angels and wicked

men are excluded from heaven ; and there are therefore no temptations of Satan and the world there. This three-fold source of guilt, danger and misery on earth has no existence in heaven. Neither are there any funerals in heaven ; no bereavements ; no mourners ; no paralysis ; no sick beds ; no sinking age or crying infancy ; not a sigh has ever been heard there ; nor a tear shed ; nor a sorrow felt ; the inhabitants weep no more, thirst no more ; the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne feeds them, and wipes away all tears from their eyes. They see God ; and “in His presence there is fulness of joy.” They behold the exalted Jesus, and sit on the throne with Him. They mingle with the angels, and are equal to them. They sit down with the patriarchs, prophets and apostles, and join them in their hallelujahs to God and the Lamb.

As their holy life *in* Christ Jesus on earth fitted them for their holier life *with* Him in heaven ; so their diversified gifts and employments here may prepare them for corresponding employments there. The endless variety which we see in this world will doubtless have its counterpart in heaven. We see it in the kingdoms of nature, providence and grace ; we observe it coexistent with time ; and we believe it will exist throughout eternity, and perpetually add to the happiness of heaven. What variety of aspect do we see on the face of the heavens and the earth ! What variety in the vegetable and animal world ; in plants and flowers, and trees—in insects, fishes, birds and fourfooted beasts ; in the stature, features, tastes and genius of men ; in the gifts, style and offices of the inspired writers, as well as in the thrones, dominions, principalities and powers of angels. “*O Lord, how manifold are Thy works ! in wisdom hast Thou made them all.*”

The different stations and orders in the world, the Church, and in heaven, suppose and require various talents and qualifications to perform their duties and fulfil their designs. This life is a training school for heaven. No small part of our present training consists in ministrations to each other. Angels themselves are "ministering spirits;" and it is their happiness as well as duty to be so. The ministers and saints of God on earth imbibe the same feeling, and delight in the same work. What they feel, they wish others to feel; what they know, they wish others to know. The love of Christ constrains them, and out of the feelings of their hearts their mouths speak. It is so in heaven in a degree as much higher as heaven is higher than the earth. To tell good news is delightful to the heart of friendship and love. In heaven friendship is consummated and love is all in all; and the feeling which dictated the exclamation on earth, "Hear all ye, what the Lord hath done for my soul," will, in its vigour of heavenly perfection, prompt the spirits of the just to an intercourse the most instructive and delightful. Their degrees of knowledge are as various as are their powers and the period of their residence in that exalted state. Though they are all stars, yet one star differeth from another star in glory; and while some shine with the brilliancy of stars, others shine with the brightness of the sun. And as God does nothing in vain, their peculiar gifts and labours on earth will prepare them for peculiar stations and employments in heaven; and their diversified knowledge, and powers, and orders qualify and adapt them variously to unfold and illustrate the manifold wisdom of God "in bringing many sons to glory."

What wonders may not Noah narrate of the antedilu-

vian world, the deluge-judgment, and the rainbow-promise, in connection with subsequent dispensations of Providence on earth and their issues in heaven ! How pre-eminently qualified must Moses be, after thousands of years of heavenly vision and contemplation, to explain the institutions and lead the worship, the first drafts and symbols of which he received and established at Horeb ! What conspicuous part may David take in that music of the heavenly world, the spirit and strains of which he cultivated so much on earth ! And with what a soul of light and glory may Isaiah then dilate upon the humiliations and triumphs of the virgin-born Immanuel, and the Apostle Paul on salvation by sacrifice, from the first offering of Abel to the achievements of Calvary ! And may we not suppose corresponding and appropriate stations and employments for the edification and joy of the whole family of heaven, assigned to such just men made perfect as a Eusebius and an Usher, a Burnett and a Mosheim, who employed themselves in time and edified believers on earth with histories of the providence of God in the establishment, preservation and triumphs of His Church ; a Boyle and a Ray, who greatly improved the science of natural and experimental philosophy, and sanctified it to religion ; a Luther and a Calvin, a Latimer and a Knox, whose souls were instinct with the life and power of the Church of Christ, and whose lives were consecrated to the revival of its purity ; a More and a Howe, whose meditative "spirits explored the heavenly regions before their entrance there ; a Baxter and an Alleine, who sought the conversion of sinners ; a Wesley and a Fletcher, who aimed at the perfection of believers and the holiness of the world. And the same wisdom which assigns appropriate stations and employments to these

and thousands of other "burning and shining lights" of the Church, will be at no loss in conferring corresponding and suitable rewards upon all the "spirits of the just, according to the deeds done in the body." The heavenly vessels may vary in their dimensions; but they are all "vessels of honour," and they shall all be filled to their utmost capacity. They can each say, *God is mine*; for they are *all* "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." The same celestial fire burns in all their bosoms, and melts them into one "spirit with the Lord." All is love, and therefore all is delight. They not only behold a transfigured Jesus, but they are transfigured with him—approximating him in perfection and happiness for ever and ever. New subjects of admiration are perpetually engaging their attention; new streams of knowledge are perpetually flowing into their minds; new themes of praise are perpetually employing their tongues. Their weight of glory is far more exceeding and eternal.

Such, my brethren, are some of the thoughts suggested by the phrase of the text. Many practical remarks naturally flow from the foregoing observations. I will confine myself to one—a lesson of instruction to all.

The subject of our present discourse suggests a lesson of instruction to all. The members of the church are reminded how soon their present seats will be vacant, to work while they have time to work, and to be ready for their summons hence. Parents are reminded how soon they may be removed from their present domestic charge, and how important to leave to their offspring the legacy of religious instruction, a holy example, and fervent prayers. We are all reminded of our inevitable connection with death and eternity; and the topics of discourse

demonstrate the inseparable connection between the elements and principles of the Church militant and the Church triumphant—between pardon and regeneration and sanctification on earth, and glory in heaven. It is a maxim no less true than universal in Christendom, that “grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected.” The glory in which the Apostle Paul shines with such immortal lustre, began in conversion—in repentance, faith and adoption. To “see God” in heaven, we must know Him on earth, to be “like Him” there, we must resemble Him here. This is the purpose of the Gospel—to restore us to the favour and renew us in the image of God. It is the purpose of Satan to defeat this object—to make us his prey, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Which of these purposes have you been pursuing? Into which of them do you now enter? “Choose ye, whom ye will serve.” The awful option is in your own hands. The way, the truth, the life are before you—made accessible to you by “precious blood.” Will you walk in that way? Will you receive that truth? Will you inherit that life? “What will it profit you to gain the whole world, and lose your own soul? Or what will you give in exchange for your soul?” The “spirits of the just men made perfect” can alone exhibit the end of a Christian’s “work of faith and labour of love.”—Which of these ends do you prefer? Defer not your choice till tomorrow. Decide now. Incur not the guilt of rejecting the Son of God; but secure the blessedness of receiving Him. Be not deceived. The character of your life will determine your state in eternity. “For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlast-

ing.” Then sow to the Spirit, and your harvest will be certain, glorious, and eternal. Be Christians on earth, and you will be “spirits of the just made perfect” in heaven. May this be the portion of us all, for Christ’s sake ! Amen.





CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

The perfection attained by St. Paul ; the perfection he desired and sought ; and the spirit and conduct he manifested in securing such.

SERMON IV.

By REV. J. BORLAND, OF ST. JOHNS.

“ Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.” PHIL. iii. 12, 13, 14, 15.



THE perfection of teaching is the judicious blending of the exposition of principles with their illustration in consistent practice. Such teaching in divine truth we have by the sacred writers, and by none so than by the Apostle St. Paul. By him its principles, in their relations and bearings, were clearly stated, while in his life their practical value and importance, were as clearly illustrated and enforced.

Nor was his consistency of conduct in any instance lacking. For apprehending the truth he held and taught to be of sovereign importance, he applied it to himself and others with the greatest earnestness and resolution. With an ardour that had no abatement, as it was scarcely possible to have any increase, he went forward in the inculcation and practice of the truth as it is in Jesus, until by a martyr's death he seized a martyr's crown.

In the two-fold aspect of an expositor and an example, he stands before us in the language of our text. In the truth he unfolds to others he is seen acting under it in the wonted ardour of his quenchless zeal; and, therefore, holding up his conduct, and the inflexible purpose by which he was animated, he exhorts, saying, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

In these words we have a state of perfection avowed; a state of perfection desired; and then the statement of the spirit and conduct of the Apostle in seeking that perfection. We will consider these subjects in the order thus given.

I. THE APOSTLE AVOWS A PERFECTION WHICH HE AND OTHERS POSSESSED. WHAT IS THAT PERFECTION? His words are, "Let us, therefore, as many as be *perfect*, be thus minded." With not a few Christians the employment

of the word perfect, or perfection, when applied to character, or spiritual attainment, is a fearful abuse of language, and an assumption of Christian standing of serious error, if not of perilous blasphemy. While their efforts to set aside the application of these terms by the Holy Spirit, to servants of God in different periods and places, and that in their only grammatical and legitimate bearing, are amusing, when not exciting more serious emotions.

Of Job God did not hesitate to say that he was "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil." (Job i. 8, and ii. 3.) Then, again, the Spirit of God says: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." (Ps. xxxvii. 37.) And, not unnecessarily to multiply Scripture on the subject, let it suffice to remind the reader that our Lord commands that we should be "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Math. v. 48); while St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says: "And this also we wish, even your perfection." While in the Hebrews he presses the exhortation, "Let us go on unto perfection."

It is important that our creed be accompanied *with*, and not contradictory *of*, the Holy Scriptures.

Yet it may be asked, "does not the Apostle contradict himself by saying, 'not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.'" And the answer is, in appearance he does, but not in reality. Let it be our business, therefore, to discover his consistency with himself, and with the doctrines of the gospel generally.

1. *The Apostle, as are all truly Christians, was a perfectly justified person before God.*

He could say without any hesitancy, or in words of doubt-

ful meaning : “ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God throughour Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. v. 1.) And, “ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” (Rom. viii. 1.) The work of justification in his case was complete, full and perfect. This both as to the fact, and its evidence upon his own mind. Nor is it possible to over-estimate the value and importance of this attainment : as thus is the soul saved from the tormenting anxiety—suitably expressed by Wesley, when he says :

“ Who can resolve the doubt
That tears my anxious breast;
Shall I be with the damned cast out,
Or numbered with the blest ? ”

To numbers the solution of this question appears without any importance, as they never grasp the seriousness of the subject to which it refers. Without any just concern for the frown of God against impenitent transgressors, or of the responsibilities which their relations to God involve, they are in no condition to place any value upon a knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins; yet such alters not the nature of the fact to those who realize it : and a perfect assurance of it will ever be acknowledged as a blessing of inestimable value.

2. *The Apostle was in a perfectly regenerated state.*

He knew—he felt fully, perfectly, assured that he was “ a new creature in Christ Jesus ; ” that he had been “ brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” That he had received “ power to become ” a “ son of God.” That he had been “ born,

not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." That "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" had made "him free from the law of sin and death." And that now his experience was a change *from*—yet in pleasing contrast *with*—what it was when he said, "but I am carnal, sold under sin;" and, "For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Therefore, in mournful bitterness he exclaimed: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

3. *The Apostle was the subject of a perfect consecration to God.*

Dead to sin, he was alive to God. Therefore, with perfect sincerity and confidence he could say: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 19, 20.) That such a profession was no empty boast we have only to look at his life to be perfectly assured.

When defending his apostolic character to the Corinthian Church, he said: "Are they," the false teachers who laboured to subvert the faith of the Church, "ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the

city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." And again, " Most gladly, therefore, I will rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake."

Nor was he moved from his steadfastness to Christ by such an experience ; for subsequently, when going up to Jerusalem, he addressed the elders of the Church in Ephesus, saying : " And now, behold, I go bound in spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there ; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me, but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." And to others, who with weeping solicitude for his safety, sought to turn him aside from his purpose, he said : " What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart ? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." To Christ the Master, St. Paul was fully consecrated ; therefore, with unquestionable sincerity, he could exhort, " Let us therefore, as many as be *perfect*, be thus minded." But further we would observe :

4. *St. Paul, as have all real Christians, had a perfect title to heaven.*

As a believer he was made a son of God. As a child of God he was " an heir of God, and a joint heir with

Jesus Christ." And because "the Spirit itself" bore "witness with" his "spirit that he was a child of God" (see Rom. viii. 15, 16, 17, and Gal. iv. 5, 6, 7), hence he could say: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And that were he "absent from the body," he would "be present with the Lord." That while for him "to live" was "Christ," "to die" would be "gain."

Still he says: "Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect." We may, therefore, consider,

II. IN WHAT SENSE ST. PAUL WAS NOT ALREADY PERFECT, AND THE PERFECTION TO WHICH HE ASPIRED.

1. *He would "win Christ" and be found in him, having the righteousness which is of God by faith through Christ.*

It is one of the properties of divine grace that the more it is possessed the more we become conscious of our poverty, and of our great need of larger measures of gospel blessings. Hence it is often found that while those act who apparently believe they have enough of such blessings, or at least can rest contented with the little they possess, those who are largely endowed speak as though what they had was as nothing, whilst they are restlessly anxious to get more. These are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness—who, highly enjoying what they now have, know well that that which they so much prize is at their acceptance, or within their reach, hence, they resolutely press for them.

Further, just in such proportion as these get nearer and nearer to God, and can rejoice in fullest hope of a blissful immortality, so are they most concerned

to be possessed of all the required meetness for an entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. St. Paul had renounced his own righteousness of Jewish ceremonial obedience and consistency, and "through the faith of Christ," he stood "in" Christ and before God accepted; yet, he so measured this righteousness of God by faith; and saw it so high, so deep, so broad, and so full, that he speaks as though he had none of it, or, if any, but a comparatively small portion of it. The more he was *in* Christ, the more of this righteousness he had; and the more of this righteousness he had, the more he would *win* Christ.

2. *He would know Christ more perfectly.* "That I may know Him."

What! it may be asked, did not Paul know Christ? Was it not by Christ that he was so marvellously and mightily convicted of his sins and sinfulness when on his way to Damascus? Was it not by the faith of Christ that his heavy burden of guilt and sorrow was removed through the instrumentality of Annanias? Did not Paul know Christ, when as constituting him a true Apostle, he revealed himself so to him as to justify Paul in saying: "Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" Did not Paul know Christ, his Lord, by the revelations He had made to his faith, and by the power He had exerted on his heart? If then by these and many other ways; and if by such measures of grace and blessing he attested His existence and character, how could Paul regard as a constituent element of the perfection for which he panted, a knowledge of Christ? "That I might know Him," he says.

This, as the former particular, is to be explained on the

fact, that the more we know, the less we seem to know. He knew Christ, but the knowledge acquired he regarded as nothing in comparison with what he might know. He saw there were depths and heights in the knowledge of Christ, compared with which his own attainments were as nothing. Hence in this fuller measure he would know Christ.

3. *He would know, also, the power of His (Christ's) resurrection.*

In the resurrection of our Lord there was a manifestation of power, which was at once a crowning evidence of His divine sonship and consequent deity; and with it of the perfect completeness and divine acceptance of the work of redemption as wrought out upon the cross. But with this there was also an exercise of power that triumphed over principalities and powers of the enemies of God and man. That was an earnest of the perfect and perpetual subjugation of all Christ's enemies whenever, for that end, he shall choose to assert the right and to exercise the necessary authority.

In all this was a glorious manifestation of the power of God in Christ—and that in man's behalf—which the Apostle in some commensurate degree wished to have applied to himself. That having "been planted together in the likeness of His death, he should be also in the likeness (the *full* likeness) of His resurrection." Of this he had a partial, and now he panted for a fuller knowledge and experience.

4. *He would know also "the fellowship of His sufferings," being made conformable to his death.*

It is observable that the Apostle heeds not so much the happiness and peace which the grace of Christ imparts, as

the holiness—the conformity of his nature to that of the Saviour—which it creates. He heeded not suffering if it but resulted in his greater fellowship with his Lord.

Fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, is fellowship with Christ in the most trying, yet in the most glorious displays of His sanctified manhood to the will of His heavenly Father. This was especially so in His death. When, having power to lay down His life (for no man could take it from Him), and power to take it up again, He nevertheless abandoned himself to the claims of insulted justice in man's behalf, and over an infuriated throng of human beings He poured out an intercessory supplication for mercy, while He calmly and patiently sank into the arms of death. Such an exhibition of character—bright in all the rays of divinest excellence, and that under certain circumstances the most trying and unique that the universe of intelligent beings ever witnessed, or ever will, or can, witness—filled the mind of the Apostle with an admiration so full and so commanding, that he thirsted for a fellowship with his Saviour therein in a measure he had not yet realized.

5. *He would "attain unto the resurrection of the dead."* There was, he knew, *a* resurrection for all men. For the evil as well as for the good ; for the just as for the unjust. But he as well knew that there was *the* resurrection, which as affecting the people of God, was unto life eternal. In the attainment of this object no risk was to be run. A possibility of failure was sufficient to stimulate him to constant and earnest effort for the scripturally required character for that transcendently important object.

6. Further ; *he would "apprehend that for which also he was apprehended of Christ Jesus."* We may suppose that

as the lapidary may, on the examination of a precious stone, at once conclude upon what a polish it is capable of receiving, and to what position of beauty and usefulness it might be raised and applied; so Christ may be supposed to form an estimate of the finish and excellence to which a soul is susceptible when fully subjected to the purifying and glorifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Paul, as though conscious his Lord had fully apprehended the position of beauty and usefulness of which he was susceptible, and to which, therefore, He would raise him, made it his actuating wish and prayer, that he might apprehend—in other words, might fully rise to the point to which, in his soul's apprehension, he was by Him designed.

How important that each one of us should fully realize this idea in its proper significancy. That it is not enough that we should so serve God as to get to heaven, but that we should fully meet our Lord's apprehension of the service we may render, and the position of glory and dignity to which we are capable of being raised. How inspiring is such a motive; and how worthily consistent is its manifestation in the intelligent and devout disciple of the Lord our Saviour.

Again, if Paul says: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," he had not, he felt assured, yet risen to the status of Christian excellence and conformity for which he was "apprehended of Christ Jesus," but he was resolved that nothing should be wanting in order to accomplish this. Hence, he adds: "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize

of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Here we have—

III. THE SPIRIT AND CONDUCT OF THE APOSTLE IN REACHING THE PERFECTION HE DESCRIBES.

1. *His spirit is that of earnest desire.* It is to be feared that many professing Christians seek to *retain* what they now possess rather than rise to the standard of the thoroughly matured and perfected Christian to which the provisions and promises of the Gospel point them. As a consequence, their movements exhibit no more of progress than the door that swings on its hinges. But not so the Apostle. Onwards was his desire, and onwards were his action and progress.

2. *His spirit was that of courageous and irrepressible determination.* Possibly, there might be fears within, as certainly there were foes without; yet, having mastered himself, he was resolved that nothing should hold him back from "the mark" for the courted "prize." And his conduct was in perfect and constant accord with this.

3. *For he says: "This one thing I do." Not this one thing I purpose doing, but this one thing I now do.* He was a man of one work, in the sense that whatever he did, he had but one motive, one spirit, and one end, for which he did all things; hence, though there were many things which claimed and had his attention and efforts, yet he made his doing such, subservient to, and promotive of, *one* great end, and that was the attainment of this glorious Gospel perfection. Again he says:

4. *"Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

We may not suppose that when the Apostle says, "forgetting those things which are behind," he designed we should understand his words in their full and absolute sense. No, for there were things he would never forget. He would never forget the "the rock whence he was hewn," nor "the hole of the pit whence he was digged." When it was proper to do so, he hesitated not to tell what he was "in the flesh," and what because of such had been done for him. "Circumcised," he was, "the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning (pharisaic) zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is by the law, blameless." But he so far forgot these things as that they were entirely left out of the inventory of his spiritual property and appliances, as that he made no account of them. They were as forgotten, rejected things, in his constant pursuit of the perfected Christian character. Another thing which the Apostle would never forget, but when necessary to encourage a doubting disciple, or to exalt his blessed Lord, he would hold up before the church and the world;—this was his conduct and mercies when he madly kicked against the pricks in persecuting the Lord in His disciples.

To this he refers in the following strain to Timothy: "And I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. i., 12, 13, 14.

He so far forgot the things which were behind as that he dwelt not so much upon them as upon the things before him and attainable, and now to be secured.

He reached forth, and pressed towards the mark ; showing that obstructions and difficulties were in his way. But as the Lord had said : " Strive to enter in at the strait gate," and, " Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life," and as he himself had said unto others, " Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," so, consistent with himself and with his Saviour, he strove, he reached, and pressed through or over all obstructions and difficulties, so that he might come up to the mark for the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The mark which the Apostle ever kept before him is comprehended in the particulars enumerated, and to which we have given attention. The securing of the mark he knew was the certainty of obtaining the prize—eternal life. And as the prize was eminently worthy of the effort, and all that could be endured in obtaining it, so was it too glorious an object to hazard by negligence or remissness, of which he might be capable, or into which he could be drawn. Therefore, he would so labour, contend, reach forth and press towards, as that the mark should be secured, and with it the glorious prize.

" Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." What a follower of Christ Jesus was the Apostle : and how safely may all true Christians follow him ! The perfectness of which St. Paul made profession was not exclusively Apostolic ; it was Christian in the widest sense. Nor can the Christian profession be consistently made without a participation in it to some extent, at least.

All should be perfectly satisfied of being justified—regenerated, and consecrated to God. These stand at the very entrance of the Christian's life ; the entrance of the Christian way to heaven. Being, then, assured of our participation in this grace, let us go on unto the attainment of all the mind which was also in Christ Jesus, that eventually we may stand before God perfect and entire, lacking nothing.





ANGELS STUDYING REDEMPTION.

SERMON V.

By REV. WM. STEPHENSON, HAMILTON.

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; which things the angels desire to look into.”—I. PETER, i. 11, 12.



F the highest orders of created intelligence can indulge in the contemplation of one subject more profound and worthy that contemplation than another, such subject, beyond all debate, is the glorious economy of human redemption. Whether we view that economy in the source of its origin, in the vastness of its bearings, or in the incomparable grandeur of its results, we see in it sufficient to excite and to justify whatever is reverential and adoring on the part of angels and of men. When on the one hand, we remember that in the vindication of those principles involved in the redemption of man there must of necessity be sacrifice, privation, ignominy

and death ; and when on the other, we ponder the illustrious being who deigned to embark in the interests of universal man, who deigned to encounter that turbulent current of maddest opposition, who deigned to repel, and rebut, and withstand that fierce and fiendish outrage which attended His every step, and strained His immaculate soul with unutterable sorrow. When, I say, we view the redemption of man as the expression of an impulse of infinite love—an impulse that must be expressed though at such a stupendous outlay, we cannot but regard it as in every way worthy of the most earnest research of the highest as well as lowest grades of created intelligences. We wonder not that a scheme so replete with interest because so fraught with love, should enlist the attention of angels. We wonder not that a plan so wise, so glorious, so beneficent, so expressive of “Eternal power and Godhead,” should excite angelic thought, awake angelic wonder, and claim angelic praise. We wonder not that in view of this matchless scheme of emancipation they should strike their harps to notes of deepest harmony, and, “as the voice of many waters and of great thundering,” swell the loud acclaim—“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

On Divine veracity we are informed that this ineffably glorious project of pardon and immortality angels sedulously investigate. With that sympathy which is always found in company with goodness, they “desire to look into it.” Theirs is not an idle speculation—by no means a vain curiosity. “Which things the angels *desire* to look into.” In unfolding our theme we shall notice :

I. THE SUBJECTS OF THIS INTENSE DESIRE—“ANGELS.”
“Which things the ANGELS desire to look into.” The

angels of God have ever been regarded as the brightest, purest, highest and most intelligent creations of Infinite wisdom and power. We have been wont, with good Bishop Hopkins, to regard the angels as "glorious spirits, the top and cream of creation." As touching their nature, we regard that as spirit ; as touching their office, we regard that as angel—angel or messenger—their nature spirit, their office angel. We hold that in their nature, in their essence, they are spirit. Why should it be thought incredible that there should be spiritual as well as material essences ? Dr. Watts somewhere asks : " Why may there not be spiritual and incorporeal substances, as well as material and corporeal ? " While Locke, the unrivalled logician, describes spiritual substances as " that nameless something in which certain qualities inhere." The angels of God, we think, may be represented as pure spiritual substances, and that they have a positive existence is clearly demonstrable. Some have supposed that the angels are possessed of a body—" a spiritual body"—such as the righteous are to receive at the resurrection when they are to be " equal to the angels." Whether there is in the universe any being purely detached from some sort of corporeity, and exclusively spiritual, save indeed the Great Supreme, is a question not easily answered, nor is its solution at all essential to our present purpose and enquiry. " God is a Spirit," nor can we conceive of any portion or modification of matter of whatever type as entering into His essence without being betrayed into a gross contradiction and absurdity. In regard to every other class of beings it is conjectured by many that the thinking principle is associated with some corporeal vehicle through which it derives its perceptions and by which it operates.

But whether angelic beings possess any bodily organization—whether they have any corporeal enshrinement how subtle and refined soever, is a question upon which the Scriptures are entirely silent. As already stated, we are inclined to view them as pure spiritual substances capable of assuming the human, or other modes of manifestation for the accomplishment of God's unsearchable purposes. Hence you will remember that they appeared under various forms, and in various figures during the Old Testament economy. Of this, however, we may surely rest satisfied—that the angels are the purest, the most refined, and the most spiritual beings in the universe, God himself apart. And after the most laboured, elaborate and finished argument in favour of angelic corporiety, the proudest theologian fails to demonstrate what really is the vestiture of that bright and burning spirituality which must ever remain unencumbered with a body like ours, and which is ever strong to do the will of God.

Their numbers and their names may also be matters of debate : but, "I beheld," says Daniel, "till thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool : His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him : thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." And, again, the lonely exile of Patmos exclaims : "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." But whatever may be the number of what St. Paul designates "an innumerable company of angels," we infer from

the inspired record that their position is the highest, the most ennobled and dignified that created beings could possibly occupy. Nor are their titles unmeaning, ambiguous, or equivocal. Correspondent with the loftiness of their position are their divinely selected designations. They pass before us in all the sublime *insignia* of station—the resplendent robe, the mantle woven of light, the garment whose woof and texture are immortality. We speak of them as “the sons of God,” as “angels,” as “archangels,” as “dominions, principalities and powers,” as the “morning stars,” and as “living creatures full of eyes round about.” Each term will be found expressive of relationship, or of official capacity, or of intellectual superiority, or of vitality of being. They excel in strength, they surpass in wisdom, and, in a limited sense, they inhabit eternity. Their habitation is heaven, the “throne of God and of the Lamb is in it;” and in the radiancy of its light, and in the plenitude of its joy, and in the glory of its might, they “worship God.” The blight and the mildew of corruption never marred their beauty, never stained their vestments, never impaired their energy. In the brightness of original perfection, they serve their Maker, and cast their crowns at His feet. Nor is their superiority seen only in their sinlessness and station. They are possessed of high intellectual powers. Their knowledge is above and beyond that of any created being. They are represented to us as being all sense, all intellect, all consciousness—as “having eyes within and without,” and, as comprehending with the clearness of knowledge the wisdom and the work of God. In sublime keeping with all this has ever been the place of their abode. The angels have ever dwelt in a world where truth reigns

without error, where majesty is common character, and where knowledge attains its perfection—in a world where all mysteries are solved, where all pain is banished, where all darkness is dispelled. In a world where the nature and propriety of both the means and the ends of the Divine administration are most vividly unfolded. There, day without night, since they emerged to being, since they awoke to thought, they have been employed in studying, admiring and adoring the wonders and the works of God. They faint not, neither are they weary. There is no searching of their understanding. In every object of study they find the elements of bliss, and in every engagement an increase of strength. Being pure spirits, unstraightened, unencumbered, unclogged by whatever is material, being possessed of intellects that were never shattered, never weakened, never bedimmed, and being exempted from all liability to whatsoever is frail and dying, without spot of defilement or shadow of imperfection, who shall measure the stature of their intellectual strength, or tell the range of their moral power?

But whatever may be the position of angels, whatever their grasp of thought, whatever their power of analysis and penetration; however extended their field of vision, however far-seeing their faculty of observation, howsoever abundant their stores of knowledge, and diversified their information, there is one mystery that staggers and confounds them. Equal to the solution of this mystery they have never been—it is their wonder of wonders, their problem of problems—"God manifest in the flesh." At the shrine of this wonder they bow, at the base of this Alpine mystery they confess the bound, the limit, and the horizon.

In the fact that Christ was God, they saw no wonder, nothing novel, nothing surprising—that was what always had been, what always must be, what is—“the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” But in that Christ was man, they saw the new, the unexpected, the marvellous—they saw derangement, displacement and humiliation—they saw finiteness assumed, suffering courted, death embraced—“which things the angels desire to look into.” We notice then :—

II. THE OBJECTS OF ANGELIC DESIRE ; OR, THE THINGS ANGELS DESIRE TO LOOK INTO.

And here we may observe that these “things” are expressive of all that can, in the highest degree, claim their thought, roll their song, swell their transport, or elicit their adoration. They are “things” which rose through the mist and the twilight before the enraptured vision of the earliest prophets, and brightened into a lambent glory before the eyes of the latest. They are “things” which fanned the flame of the Jewish altar, swept the line of type and prophesy, rolled on the roll of ages, and resounded as the tones of jubilee from generation to generation. They are “things” which have gilded the centuries of time, fringed the aspects of human destiny, and heaved their tide of influence over all the realms of a branded world. They are “things” which, more than any other, affect heaven, and earth, and hell. The greatest, the most stupendous “things” that ever arrested the attention of angels, men, or devils. The things into which the angels desire to look, embrace all that may be implied in, or connected with, “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” Just for a moment let us notice the first branch of angelic investigation as here presented—

"The sufferings of Christ." The angels of God have ever taken a deep and delighted interest in the evolution of the Divine counsels. But, if we may conceive that in the history of those beings there could arrive one moment of deeper interest than another or that they could be roused to a pitch of higher excitement in view of one marvel more than another, we may well conclude such moment and such marvel to embrace "the hour and power of the atonement." The imagination needs to be spurred to no violence of effort to depict an unwonted solicitude in the bearing of angels at that point in their history (if indeed we may suppose them to have been spectators of the scene), when the Synod of heaven sat, when the Conference of the skies deliberated on the plan of human recovery. What must have been their attitude, when on the stupendous problem they concentrated their powers of calculation, and, foiled and wildered, they had recourse to a fixed and solemn silence? What must have been their emotion when the startling question, "Who is found worthy to open the book?" rang through all their ranks, and orders, and hierarchies; and when neither "principality" nor "power" was found sufficient to "unloose the seals thereof?" And O! who shall tell their wordless amaze, when they saw the "Prince of Peace" rise from the depths of inaccessible light, stand on the ramparts of His throne, "lay aside His glory," and hear His exclamation—"Lo, I come! In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will O God!" They looked, and as they looked they wondered, and as they wondered they adored, and as they adored they sang—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to man." We are not, however, to suppose that

the solicitude hitherto evinced by those holy beings was at all abated in its intensity, when the Son of God, "who took not on Him their nature," was "found in fashion as a man," but rather as heightening and refining, and becoming even more intense and overpowering as the various phases of His eventful life developed. Having announced His incarnation as the most astounding event in their history, they followed Him marking every pang, witnessing every struggle, rejoicing in every triumph. They saw Him enter the wilderness where Satan singled Him out, and dared Him to battle, and they saw Him quit that scene of conflict in all the grandeur of glorious conquest. They saw Him in Olivet, they saw Him on Calvary. They saw His heart transfixed with wounds, they saw it well over with love and grief—

"And had their eyes have known a tear,
They must have wept and shed it there."

But we desire to dwell more immediately upon the sufferings of Christ as portrayed to us in the Scriptures, and as claiming the attention of angels. "The sufferings of Christ!" The very terms are expressive of the weight, the stress, the emphasis, the peculiarity of those "sufferings." In their depth, their force, their extent, those "sufferings" are without a model. Every other idea of suffering is widely different and far removed. "He suffered the just for the unjust." In that He was God, we see a peculiarity in, but no abatement of, the sufferings of Christ. While the Divinity did not, could not suffer, the humanity was none the less liable—the suffering thereof none the less severe. The awful grandeur of this subject is too often allowed to mar its interest, to abate its tender-

ness, to affect its pathos, and to restrain the roll of human sympathy. We are too apt to suppose that because of the interblending of the Divine with the human in the person of Christ, that the Divinity must have interposed to diminish the acuteness of those unutterable pangs which all but crushed His stainless spirit. Let us rather suppose that the Divinity made it possible for Him to endure more severe and complicated forms of misery—to sustain a more overwhelming pressure of anguish—yea, that it did actually dilate and enlarge His capacity of suffering, then shall we realize that, as wave after wave heaves, and breaks on His generous soul, “never was sorrow like unto His sorrow.” If we seek to set forth “the sufferings of Christ,” we lay under immediate requisition all the external symbols of distress—the scourge, the buffetings, the crown of thorns, and the cross—and it is thus by introducing the instruments of bodily torture that we work up our picture of the “suffering Son of God.” And yet, there is more in the simple expression “the sufferings of Christ,”—than the crayon ever produced, though the all but inspired genius of a Raphael, or a Reynolds should guide its strokes. The tremendous workings of His spirit, the agony of His soul, are not indexed by any material emblems of anguish, while they dislocate the energies of endurance, and baffle description. That He should be simply a “Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief,” this is nothing ; that He should exclaim “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head,” this is nothing ; that He should be branded as a winebibber, a gluttonous man, and as one having a devil, this is nothing ; that Judas should be treacherous, and Peter cowardly, and His dis-

ciples heartless in His extremity, this is nothing ; that He should be arrested, and arraigned, and crucified—this is nothing—but that Eternal Justice should “make His soul an offering for sin,”—there lies the core of the marvellous, and there the gist of His agony. Let us linger for a moment in Gethsemane—(it was only a spot “so called,” but the dews of Christ’s sacred sorrow fell there, and there is no garden like it now,) here pale, trembling, breathless, see the “Son of Man.” No earthly or celestial ministrant relieves this solitude, “and, being in an agony, His sweat becomes as it were great drops of blood.” The severity of His sufferings, together with the indescribable anguish and horror of the sufferer are strangely delineated. “His Soul is exceedingly sorrowful”—“He is heard in that He fears”—He offers prayer and supplication with strong cries and tears,” while the burden of His pleading is—“Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me.” “He treads the winepress alone ; of the people there is none with Him”—

“ His feeble flesh abhors to bear,
The wrath of an Almighty God.”

He sees the sword brandished on high, it flashes in a momentary poise, it is plunged into His soul. The blistering rain of an incensed heaven falls in molten drops upon His devoted head. It is here that He beholds in dread array the fearful preparations for His death. It is over this place that the mystic events of Calvary cast their ghastly shadows. It is here that the treachery that had huckstered Him away and trafficked in His blood, fixes its shaft in His heart. Experience and anticipation alike distress Him. He longs, and yet He trembles, to encounter the worst.

“He has a baptism to be baptized with, and how is He straightened till that be accomplished?” But let us hasten to Calvary, and contemplate the events which crowd the last crimson hour—

“Behold the Saviour of mankind,
Nailed to the shameful tree,”—

and declare, if you can, the utter loneliness of His desolation. The secret of His anguish assumes no outward show, drapes itself for no external display, utters no commanding expression—He hangs in unvoiced agony. Tell me not of the “gall and the vinegar,” of the “thorn and the spike,” of the “spitting and the spear.” These are but bubbles on the surface of an unexplored and fathomless ocean of woe, whose waves roll on in mystic fury, and boil and burst upon the hidden soul. Or, to change the figure, all that was outward, all that man did or could effect, were but as sparks to the fire that consumed, mere scintillations playing round the bosomed furnace of His anguish. “He suffered for sin,”—this was the agony of His soul, it was the soul of His agony. “He suffered for sin!” And, oh, sirs! who shall take the gauge and the dimensions of His pain?—a pain that made creation pause, and fixed the universe in rivetted amaze—a pain from which the sun shrank abashed, and the day reined his chariot into darkness—a pain that burst the rocks with alarm, and shook the globe with affright—a pain that seemed to heave hill and dale in sympathetic vibration with quivering of His lips. The angels beheld Him when, in the extreme of nature and of agony, He bowed His blessed head. They saw Him die. They watched Him enter the stronghold; they witnessed His struggle with

death, in Death's own realm. They might have supposed that this "king of darkest shade" would have yielded to the Lord of Life, or that the Champion of human deliverance would have hurled some weapon of omnipotence from the distance to crush and to destroy him. But no, He bowed beneath his power. He suffered Himself to be bound. He died, and in this was angelic wonder heightened to amazement. If we may suppose that what, to human observation were the pass and the bound, obtruded no barrier in the way of angelic discernment, then may we further suppose that their suspense ended not in that they saw Him die, in that they saw Him give up the ghost. Who shall tell how they hung and hovered around the tomb in the garden? Who shall tell how they peered, with no unmeaning curiosity, into the arena of unemblazoned conflict? Who shall tell with what eagerness, with what throbbing anxiety, they rolled away the stone from the mouth of the Sepulchre? And with what speechless awe they saw Him rise masterful and victorious from the grave? Oh! if ever transport filled an angel's breast, if ever, through all their ranks, there swept ecstatic thrill on thrill—if ever the canopy of heaven rung, or the pillars of the throne quivered, or the everlasting hills shook, or the boundaries of immortality vibrated with impassioned song on song—it was when Jesus championed death and hell, when He broke the bars of death and burst the barriers of the tomb! "Oh! the burst gates, lost sting, demolished throne, last gasp of vanquished death!"

" They brought His chariot from above,
To bear Him to His throne ;
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried
The glorious work is done."

We have thus cursorily glanced at the "sufferings of Christ," and their triumphant end.

We proceed now to invite your attention to what we understand by "the glory that should follow." We have already seen that "death was swallowed up in victory," that our glorious Redeemer rifled him of his terrors, and by virtue of conquest, robbed him of his power; but the glory was still to follow. He was still upon the earth, "seen of angels"—seen of His disciples. Forty days, however, after His successful breach on death, he ascended on high, led captivity captive, while the opening heavens received His glorified humanity as their first and highest ornament. Then it was that there were realized the greetings and the hymns, and the hallelujahs of Cherubim and Seraphim; then it was that the "morning stars sang together," and the "spirits of just men made perfect," shouted for joy; then it was that the everlasting gates were lifted up, and the "King of glory" entered. Majesty was stamped on His brow, and His diadem flashed with imperishable gems. The keys of death and of hell hung on His girdle, while "upon His vesture and His thigh" was a name written—"King of Kings and Lord of Lords." But the glory was still to follow. With the serenity of unutterable satisfaction, He took His session at the right hand of God, "from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." His merits diffused an odour and a fragrance through the length and breadth of His temple. His glance thrilled the heavenly hosts with rapture, and His mien inspired them with "joy unspeakable," and again they sang "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." "The glory that should follow" began to unfold itself. It was introduced to man

in a manner that precluded delusion or mistake. It was heard as the "sound of a rushing mighty wind;" it was seen in "cloven tongues like as of fire;" it was evidenced by signs and wonders, and marvels of power. With the descent of the Holy Ghost, the imposing rite, the speaking symbol, and the rich ceremonial of the olden times disappeared. Just

"As by the light of opening day
The stars are all concealed,"

so was the glory of every former dispensation lost in the outbursting brightness of the glory that *then* followed. This, however, was but as the breaking of the morning. The *glory* was still to follow, more and more to the perfect day. But let us enquire in what consisted the "glory" which thus became the theme of such earnest investigation on the part of angels. May we not conclude that it was—

I. *The glory of developed mercy!*

All the manifestations of the infinite with which angels had been favoured—all that they had witnessed in the administration of the Divine Government—all that they had seen in the procedure of the eternal Lawgiver, consisted in a rigid and determinate maintainance of truth and justice. When, therefore, they saw sin in all its malignity, and the truth and justice of God at stake, in the threatenings He had uttered against it; when they expected that in one deed of vengeance He would complete His every denunciation, and assert, before an intelligent universe, the impartiality of His government—with what desire must they have dwelt upon His acts, when, instead thereof, they saw the out-

beaming of an attribute new and heretofore undiscovered? Mercy with angels was new, novel, strange ; what they had not expected, of which they had never calculated. When one of their principalities, a chief among the "sons of the morning," marshalled a mad and impotent confederacy against the "throne and monarchy" of the Eternal, when "he raised impious war in heaven, with battle proud and vain attempt," insulted Godhead hurled him "down to bottomless perdition, there to dwell in adamant chains and penal fire." In the case of man, they beheld another, and not less daring revolt; but instead of a judgment equally summary and unassuaged, they saw mercy "stoop to conquer" and to deliver. "Which things the angels desire to look into." We have said that mercy was an attribute of the Divine nature, which, antecedently to the rebellion of man, had not showed itself in its forbearance and its clemency. When, therefore, on behalf of man, it arose and put forth the might and grandeur of its claims, and bent itself low, to wipe the brand of ruin from a fallen brow, they wondered and adored. They could have had no idea, until cognizant of God's dealings with man, that His love was of such a nature, that it could retain the ardour and the intensity of its yearnings amid all the risings of such enmity and such insurrection. And hence, when they saw that the Almighty encircled with a zone of compassion a rebellious race, and girded Himself with love, and went in quest of a ransom for the lost, and gave His own Son to baffle the stratagems of hell, they fell back in amaze. When they discovered that through this development of mercy, "a new and a living way" was opened for the return of the apostate—and when they saw it heave and roll over first

one theatre of conspiracy, and then another, and beheld its refining and saving effects on the disaffected and the treasonable, they "shouted for joy." We may well conclude then, that a scheme so replete with pardon, so abounding with life, and so illustrative of Divine mercy, should swell angelic "desire." Hence again, their joy and their jubilee when mercy triumphs in the plucking of a sinner as "a brand from the burning." They see Mercy go out to meet the sinner in the error of his way; they see the sinner smitten with a sense of his sin, and they joyfully minister to an "heir of salvation." They quit their golden thrones, their dazzling diadems, their radiant abode; they leave the sublime song, and symphony and hallelujah chorus of celestial minstrelsy, that they may gaze upon the tear, and listen to the sigh of the returning prodigal. And when on high the fact is known that the tear has actually gathered, and that the sigh has really heaved and broken in the bosom of the stranger to such an emotion—that the sinner has fairly repented his sin—the tides rise, and the raptures sweep, and "there is more joy in the presence of the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons." And are we not justified in supposing that this flow of congratulation is strengthened, and enhanced, and intensified, just as the magnitude of mercy is magnified in the magnitude of the transgression repented of and forgiven? The might, and the greatness, and the glory of mercy, developed and exemplified in the pardon of iniquity, transgression and sin is, we think, a phase of that glory into which angels desire to look. Again, we imagine that it embraces the glory—

2. Of unfolded truth in its relation to man.

Whether we recognize truth amid the myriad mysteries of nature, science, or philosophy; whether we trace her footsteps in the fields of celestial light, or listen to her voice as it rises above the dull dissonance of earth's jarring tongues, we find that her price is above rubies, and earth's greatest treasures are as nothing when compared with her. Changeless amid ceaseless change, unaltered amid universal alteration, she claims the eternal years of God as hers. And yet, for how many ages did truth remain latent, or at least unknown. Take even God's chosen, His peculiar, His specially favoured people—they to whom pertained the oaths, the promises, and the covenant—they to whom were entrusted the "lively oracles," and how limited was their knowledge, and how dim and sepulchral the lights of their temple. Theirs was a religion of symbols, and of shadows, and of outward and sensuous signs. Nor did the deep organ-tones of prophecy swell into such volume as to give anything like a definite idea of the purpose of the Infinite. The reach of human philosophy fell painfully short when she attempted to explore the realms of the True, and to sound the depths of the Divine. Nor was it until He who was the "Truth and the Life," threw open her secret places, that either man or angels could understand her language and her strength. His life and His teaching, however, solved the problem of ages. In His life, and in His death, every type was illustrated, every shadow substantiated, and the old herald-stars were lost in the brightness and effulgence of His rising. The throne of ancient night was broken, and its ebon sceptre was resigned for ever. It was then that humanity arose—arose to more than pristine dignity and

greatness—it was then that the superincumbent incubus of guilt and darkness was rolled away—it was then that man was allowed and enabled to bathe his intellect and his heart in the crystalline splendours of truth and of purity. Everything essential for man to know of God and himself, of time and eternity, of earth and of heaven, was written as in sunbeams. Truth sprang out of the earth, righteousness looked down from heaven. And when those beings whose love of truth is only equalled by their devotion to the God of truth—when they saw its influence upon our race, how it clarified the human intellect, and purified the human heart, how it transformed the life of man, and poured a new complexion over his moral history; when they saw how that, by the development of truth, Jehovah had diffused through the scattered wrecks of a stupendous rebellion a new force of vitality, and beheld the rebellious renovated by the power of truth, crowding the avenues to Zion, they “shouted for joy!” This surely was a phase of that following glory into which the angels desire to look.

3. *Christ risen, and mediatorial glory must enlist their thought.*

Let us for a moment take a higher stand, let us scale a loftier altitude and join Cherubim and Seraphim in gazing on the glory of an exalted Redeemer. It is saying little to say that the highest, purest, most entrancing exhibitions of the Deity are mediatorial. One like unto the Son of Man is in the midst of the “Golden Candlesticks”—“The Lamb is in the midst of the Throne”—while every tributary of heaven’s glory seems but to swell the floods which rise from man’s redemption. “We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour.” The tokens of his passion, the

scars of the sacrificial knife are still visible on His sacred person.

“He looks like a Lamb that has been slain, and wears His priesthood still.” “I saw,” says John, “seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man.” Like unto the Son of Man! Hear, O ye heavens, and wonder! He seized our nature, wrenched it from the grasp of the tomb, with Him it passed the crystal ports of light and shines resplendent in the midst of the golden candlesticks. “And His eyes were as a flame of fire”—not flashing, and blasting, and consuming—but radiant as the sun, serene as the ether, and soft as everlasting love. “And His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength;” “And on His head were many crowns.” The brightest, however, of these “many crowns” must have been the mediatorial one. The jewelled crown of empire must have paled its lustre before the splendour of redemption’s diadem. This was no garland of celestial laurel, no chaplet woven of rainbows, but a crown begemmed and flashing with the starry worth of all the ransomed. We think we are warranted in assuming that the supreme honours and glories of the Godhead are mediatorial. And although the mediatorial element may have entered into the administration of the Divine Government, may have exerted its influence coeval with God’s dealings with men, yet it was not until the completion of the redemptive work, and Jesus was exalted a Prince and a Saviour, that angels saw its matchlessness, and proclaimed its glory. But from the structure of this passage we infer, that the glory into which angels desire to look is the glory—

4. Of Christ's Universal Conquest.

We have already seen that the angels take a lively and unwearying interest in the exhibitions and triumphs of Divine truth. And when "the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at My right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool," it put them on the utmost stretch of all their power to ascertain and to measure the vastness of His achievements. They know that He must reign "till all His enemies shall be put under His feet." That He shall have "the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." They know that "His name shall endure forever," and that "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." And allow me to ask, who shall justly paint the new scenes of glory ever opening to angelic gaze, and lifting angelic song in connection with the conquest of Emmanuel? If "there is more joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons," who shall number the occasions of their gladness, or tell the "waves of delighted sensibility" that sweep their ranks, as day after day, hour after hour, moment after moment some new triumph is secured, some new victory is won? There must be something approaching ecstasy in angelic emotion as they behold Christianity clothing with a glad enchantment the wide wastes of the earth, and causing its solitudes to pulsate anew in virtue of a higher life. Who shall tell with what assiduity and tenderness, in view of the beneficent bearing of His ministry they tend the missionary of the Cross as he urges his Commission to the neglected and forgotten? O, it is an invigorating thought, that such is the nature of the missionary's work when you send

him forth, and he goes, clad in the might which God supplies, you touch a spring which stirs angelic sympathy, and brings angelic aid. Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth? and may we not suppose that if a man or woman can occupy one position more interesting to angels than another, it is that of the missionary. Whether he makes his home in "fiery climes," or "dwells in thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice," they become the servants of your servant—rejoicing in his joy, soothing his sorrow, announcing his victories, and bearing his record on high. And thus, and thus it shall be, till the river shall become an ocean; till the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as seven days; till every prison shall be empty, and every colony without a conscript, and every continent without a sinner; till a ransomed earth shall roll its rapturous hosannahs to the vaulted heavens, "and heaven and earth conspire to praise Jehovah and His conquering Son." "Which things the angels desire to look into." Which things "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Stupendous things! When I think of their plummetless profound I exclaim, "O, the depth both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" When I muse on their transcendent glory, I exclaim, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain unto it." "Deep calleth unto deep," mountains on mountains rise, firmament encircleth firmament, and glory excelleth glory. But here we are lost, and with angels *desire* to look into these things. Happily for us, they are things which belong unto us and to our children, for ever and ever. We share their worth and in a sense, beyond an angel's reach, understand their import.

And when earth shall have garnered its sheaves in everlasting storehouses, then, while angels sing their song of laudation—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Our longest, loudest, deepest, sweetest song shall be "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."





A TRINITY OF INDISPENSABLES TO CHURCH INTEGRITY AND PROS- PERITY.

SERMON VI.

By REV. J. CARROLL, LESLIEVILLE.

“Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength : let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.—ii Chronicles, vi. 41.



HERE are certain periods, or junctures, when the emergent religious necessities of a community force themselves upon the minds of the thoughtful and devout with more than ordinary conviction and power. We should be attentive to these necessities at all times, but there are some particular occasions when we can scarcely ignore them, if we would. Such an emergency was upon the Israelites of old, when King Solomon uttered the petitions embraced in the text.

This verse is a part of the solemn dedicatory prayer offered by the then wise and pious king at the consecra-

tion of the first Temple at Jerusalem. The treasure and materials had been a very long time in process of accumulation, ever since the reign of David. The walls had been reared—the roof surmounted the building—the carving, gilding and draping were done. The appointed day for the dedication had arrived—the tribes of God's Israel had assembled from every part of the holy land—hecatombs of sacrificial victims had bled—rivers of oil and wine had flowed as libations ; but these were not enough—the presence and blessing of the Great Supreme were required to cause this building to fulfil the ends for which it was built. Hence prayer was solemnly offered that all the blessings sought by the worshippers who should resort to that shrine might be timely granted—such as succour in defeat—rain in time of drought—and health when pestilence scattered its blight over the land. Having asked for all these, and more, with all necessary amplification, the royal supplicant comes, in the name of the assembled thousands of whom he was the spokesman, to offer the crowning request of all : “ Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength : let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness ! ”

There are three things here desiderated for God's Church, most important to its welfare in all time, to which it is very necessary for Canadian Methodists to direct their prayerful attention just at this juncture, when we are entering, not only a new ecclesiastical year, but a confederation and union of Methodist churches, which has been intended and hoped to subserve the interests of true religion in these Provinces to an extent not heretofore realized ; these desiderata are—*The Strengthening Pre-*

sence of the Lord God in the midst of His Church, a salvation-clothed ministry, and a membership of rejoicing saints.

Let us pay particular attention to each of these, as objects of desire and cultivation.

We need—

I. THE STRENGTHENING PRESENCE OF THE LORD GOD IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE. “Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength.”

The “resting place” of God, here mentioned, would, first of all, signify the Temple, comprehending especially the “Mercy Seat,” beneath the wings of the cherubim, and over the “Ark of the Covenant,” where the visible symbol of God’s presence rested in the form of a cloud of glory. It was so called probably from the fact that the symbol of His presence had accompanied the removal of the migratory tabernacle from place to place during Israel’s unsettled state. But the Temple was a permanent structure, deeply founded, and liable to no such removal. He had said of this house (Ps. cxxxii. 14) “This is my rest for ever : here will I dwell ; for I have desired it.” Yet He has dwellings which He prefers even to this ; these are the hearts of His people, severally and collectively. Thus, therefore, while He is “the High and Lofty one, who inhabiteth eternity,” His dwelling is with the “lowly,” “to revive the spirit of the contrite ones.” So, also, with regard to His people in general, He has declared, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.” The psalmist says of the Church, “God is in the midst of her ; she shall not be moved : God shall help her, and that right early.” (Ps. xlv. 5.)

The manner in which this desire for the advent of God’s

presence in His Church is expressed, is peculiar, and very significant: "Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength." First, as to the word "arise," it may have been used in reference to the spectacle often exhibited during the journeys in the wilderness, of the *cloudy*, or *fiery pillar*, according as it was day, or night, by whose "rising up from off the camp,"—movements, and resting again, the Israelites were guided in their journeys and halts. But the use of the word "arise" is more likely to refer to the following facts: Orientals perform many acts which we perform upon our feet, in a sitting posture; and when they arise, we know they have something of special energy and importance to perform. Thus, God's special doings are represented as being done in this active way; "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered." (Ps. lxviii. 1.) "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come." (Ps. cii. 13.) It therefore means, let God bestir Himself, and come with mighty energy and speciality into His Church and the hearts of His people.

Further, "Thou, and the ark of thy strength." "Thou," Thyself, in mighty deeds, not by mere symbols, or a mere fiction, but the power of Thine Almighty Spirit! "Ark of Thy strength." The "Ark," containing the tables of the Law and the memorials of certain miracles occurring in the wilderness, the cover of which, beneath the wings of the cherubim, pre-eminently the spot where the symbol of God's presence rested, was there already, but the royal supplicant wished God's strengthening presence, the great ark of safety to God's people, to come also in very and mighty deed among them.

It was this powerful presence of God which made His ministry and His people so potent for good in the best ages of the Church : in the apostolic age—the days of the Puritans—the times of the early American revivals—the days of early Methodism—and which occasioned the marked success which has crowned some of our modern missions—those in the South Seas, about thirty years ago, where hundreds and thousands, in some cases, were “born in a day.” But why do I speak of these? Was it not this power which gained such remarkable testimony to the ministry of Mr. Caughey, and to the lessons of the Rev. Wm. Taylor, in England, Australia, South Africa, and India ; and which still more recently has crowned the preaching and efforts of two American laymen in Scotland and the North of England with such glorious results?

This, therefore, is that which we ought to acknowledge our need of—to pray and labour for, by putting away whatever repels the presence and blessing of God, and by co-operating with this saving energy when it is vouchsafed. Let us set our hearts upon this. It is not enough for us to say, “We have a fine church—an able ministry, and plenty of funds ; we shall, therefore, necessarily have prosperity.” Nay, these are good and valuable, and to some extent necessary, but they will all be vain unless God “come with a recompense, and come and save us.”

The presence of God is needful because it is the producing cause of the other objects desired, and bound up with the Church’s prosperity. We notice the first of these two conditions of prosperity, namely :—

II. A SALVATION-CLOTHED MINISTRY. “Let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation !”

There are several instructive points of analogy between

the ancient Aaronic and true ministers of the Gospel. Not indeed that there is any warrant for calling a Christian minister a priest, in the sense of the Romanist and the Episcopalian Ritualist. The minister is a priest it is true, in the sense in which all God's people are, a "royal priesthood," or "kings and priests to God and the Lamb." Still, the Aaronic priest was in some sense the prototype of the Gospel minister. Like him, the minister must be "called of God as was Aaron;" and, like him, supremely consecrated to God. The first offered sacrifices, which, though they "could not take away sin," pointed to the sufferings of Him "who in the end of time put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself;" while, it is the business of the latter to cry "Behold, behold, the Lamb!" "The priest's lips were to teach knowledge, and they were to seek the law at His mouth; the Gospel is to "teach the people all the words of this life"—to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."

But if the minister would be efficient, he must "be clothed with salvation" "as with a garment." The Jewish priest wore sacerdotal robes, symbolical of his functions, but while the Israelites had the symbols, we are to have the *reality*. Need I say that salvation is a deliverance from evil, from moral evil especially—namely, the guilt, power and pollution of sin. There are two respects in which a minister must be clothed with salvation: he must be "clothed with righteousness as a garment," unto his *own personal salvation*; and he must be clothed, or "endowed," with *power to proclaim it* efficiently to others.

1. *He must be the subject of salvation himself.*

That is, he must be unmistakably and pre-eminently a saved man. He must possess the comforts and exem-

plify the fruits of the salvation he offers to others. He must know God consciously as a pardoning God, and his own spirit in God's pardoning and justifying love. It must so glow in his heart and beam in his countenance, while he longs to proclaim it to others, in something like the exultant words of the poet :—

“ What we have felt and seen,
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men,
The signs infallible.

“ We who in Christ believe,
That He for us hath died,
We all this unknown peace receive,
And feel His blood applied.

“ Exults our rising soul,
Disburdened of its load,
And swells unutterably full
Of glory and of God !”

It is needful for him also to have deliverance from the power and pollution of sin. He must exhibit both one and the other in the command of his tempers, appetites, and passions ; and in his loving compassion to the souls of sinful men.

In proportion as a minister's personal happiness in God and His holiness, will be his power for good with those to whom he ministers. Nay, his life and conversation will be a continual sermon, saying, “ Follow me as I follow Christ.”

These reflections will lead us to remark :

2. *Ministers must be clothed with power to proclaim Salvation efficiently.* When Jesus was about to leave his

disciples and to go away into Heaven, he directed them to return to Jerusalem and to "tarry in the city until they were endued with power from on high." Now, I say that the word "endue" signifies to *clothe*. This is something not necessarily put on with the assumption of priestly robes. It is not conferred in its plenitude on every converted man, but on those whom God has truly called to the ministerial work. Nor even do such enjoy it pre-eminently at all times. It is a divine bestowment, in answer to earnest, persevering prayer. When an eminently successful minister was asked how it was that he won so many more souls than his ministerial brethren, many of whom were superior to him in learning and talents, he answered, "It is a live business, brother." Some of the men thus divinely endowed were Edwards, Brainard, Whitfield, Bramwell, John Smith, Collins, Payson and Calvin Wooster. Let ministers, therefore, supplicate it for themselves, and the people of God, with one accord, ask it for their ministers. Oh that this endowment might be universally accorded to our pastors at home, and the missionaries of the church abroad!

Yet ministers are not the only ones concerned in furthering the progress of the church and the prosperity of religion, which the church is organized to promote in the world.

This remark will lead us to notice the last desideratum or object of desire, namely:—

III. A MEMBERSHIP OF REJOICING SAINTS. "And let thy saints rejoice in goodness!"

It is difficult to determine which is the more important to the welfare of the church and mankind, who it was designed to benefit—a *proper ministry* or a *proper member-*

ship. There are two elements in this desideratum relative to the membership of the church, which are important for us to notice : first, their *holiness* ; and secondly, their *happiness*.

1. *Their holiness is to be desired*—that is their undeniable and eminent holiness. Observe, they are denominated “Saints,” or *holy ones*. The word saint, it is known very well, is derived from *sanctus*, holy ; and all true Christians are holy, to some extent, at least. They are called “holy brethren” (Heb. iii. 1) ; and apostolic provision is made for the instruction of “all the holy brethren” (1 Thess. v. 27). There are two respects in which they are holy—namely, *constructively* holy, and *really* holy.

First, *constructively* holy, having put on, by faith, the justifying righteousness of Jesus, God “sees no iniquity in Jacob, no transgression in Israel.” They are treated as innocent—as though they never had sinned. But there is a “real holiness” attending this reckoning of them holy. The faith which justifies also “works by love and purifies the heart.” God commands us to be holy as He is holy. Yea, we are to “perfect holiness in the fear of God.” These two (holiness declarative and real) not only coincide together, but they correspond in their proportionate advancement. The brighter the evidence of our acceptance with God, the more of purity we possess and exemplify. Holiness in the members of the church is useful, as commending the character of the Gospel, and necessary to their moral influence for good.

But there is that other characteristic inseparable from holiness, and which is essential to the believer’s well-being and well-doing ; and that is—

2. *Happiness.* It is expressed by the phrase, "rejoice in goodness." It may be taken in two ways: as rejoicing in *enjoying good*, and in *seeing good done*.

(1) Rejoicing in the experience and *enjoyment* of "goodness," which embraces peace and joy, and power and purity. That is, in plain terms, rejoice in *feeling* that they are safe and happy. God wills both the one and the other. "He is a God ready to pardon." He does not delight in keeping us at a distance, or in having us "walk in darkness." Nay; He wills us to "rejoice evermore," yea, to "ask and receive that our joy may be full." Joy is not only the privilege of saints, but the exercise of it is their duty. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice," says the voice of inspired authority. Joyfulness contributes to progress and to usefulness. Plants do not flourish well in the shade, sun-light being necessary to their growth and vigorous health. So also hopefulness and comfort contribute to our advancement in religion; "We are saved by hope." Further, a pleasing countenance and habitual happiness are both very efficient in commending religion to those who do not, as yet, possess it. All are ready to ask, "Who will show us any good?" We want to be happy, tell us where happiness is to be found! And how naturally they think we are qualified to tell when we seem to have found it ourselves, by the "lifting up of the light of God's countenance upon us." God's servants must not bring up an evil report upon religion by gloominess. Therefore,

(2) Such joyful ones should, and will, rejoice in *seeing good done*. God's strengthening presence in His church—a salvation-clothed ministry—and a joyful membership of holy persons, which are all linked together: these are

almost certain to see good accomplished. Or, in other words, to see gainsaying silenced—the careless awakened—mourners comforted—the bewildered directed—the feeble strengthened—the people of God built up—and religion revived and advanced in all respects upon a gloriously triumphant scale. Oh, how desirable is this ! How important that we pray and labor for a consummation so devoutly to be wished. God hasten it in His time !
AMEN.





THE GLORIOUS ASCENSION AND TRI- UMPHANT REIGN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

SERMON VII.

BY THE REV. WM. GALBRAITH, MONTREAL.

“Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive : thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” Ps. lxxviii. 18.



HIS Psalm was probably composed by David on the occasion of the removal of the Ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem. In a pitched battle, the Philistines, the great enemy of the seed of Jacob, defeated the Israelites, and slew of them four thousand men.

The Hebrews cherished the most profound reverence for the Ark of the Covenant, and possessed boundless confidence in its power. This need awaken in us no surprise when we consider the many sacred associations of the Ark. It contained the golden pot of manna, Aaron's

rod that budded, and the two tables of stone upon which were engraven, by the finger of the Almighty, the Ten Commandments. The lid of the Ark, which was covered with pure gold, constituted the mercy seat. At each end of the Ark was a hieroglyphic figure called the cherub. Between the cherubims was the shechinah, or glory-cloud, hovering over the mercy-seat, and symbolizing the Divine presence, and from which responses were given in an audible voice to the enquiring priests. Hence it is that Jehovah, in Scripture, is so often said to dwell between the cherubims. Frequently the Israelites had witnessed the most marvellous exhibitions of Divine power in connection with the Ark. They could not forget that in olden time when the priests bearing the Ark stepped into the water, Jordan's turbid streams rolled backward in mountain heaps, forming a dry passage for the hosts of God to pass over. Memory recalled the time when their forefathers went to battle against the Canaanites without the Ark, and were defeated; but when it accompanied them at the siege of Jericho they were victorious. Being now defeated, and many of them slain, they vainly imagined the Ark could save them when the God of Israel had forsaken them on account of their numerous and aggravating offences. Therefore the elders of the people said, "Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh amongst us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies." The Ark was accordingly brought; but in vain. Israel was again smitten before the enemy, and there was a very great slaughter among the people; for there fell that day thirty thousand men.

The aged and infirm priest, Eli, sat by the wayside

anxiously awaiting the first intelligence from the battlefield. A man of Benjamin ran with the doleful tidings. Each sentence he uttered rose above its predecessor in the terribleness of its signification. First he announces, "Israel has fled before the enemy." This was a great calamity. "There has also been a very great slaughter among the people." This was still more distressing. "Thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead." This was still more heart-rending ; but the climax is yet to come. "And the Ark of God is taken." The hoary priest bore all patiently till mention was made of the capture of the Ark. He was then transfixed with grief ; and falling headlong, he dislocated his neck, and there gave up the ghost. In the meantime, the Philistines took the Ark, and placed it in the temple of their chief god ; but the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them and their idol for their retention of the Ark. After being smitten with disease and death for seven months, they deemed it expedient to return the Ark to Israel. Preparations were accordingly made ; and they sent it to Bethshemesh ; thence it was conveyed to the obscure house of Abinadab, in Kirjath-jearim. After the lapse of many years David resolved to bring the Ark into Zion. Extensive preparations were made. Thirty thousand chosen men of Israel were assembled. They set the Ark on a new cart, purposing thus to transfer it to Jerusalem. When the oxen shook the cart, Uzzah put forth his hand to hold the Ark ; but the Lord smote him for his error, and he died. Ah, poor Uzzah had forgotten that the strict prohibition of Heaven, under the awful penalty of death, was that no unconsecrated hand should touch the Ark. Uzzah is the first on record to violate the command ; and the first to

endure the terrible consequences. The whole multitude were arrested in their progress. They knew not what to do. For touching the Ark, one of their number was lying in the cold embrace of death. They stood amazed and perplexed in the presence of this symbol of the Divine Majesty. In the midst of their dilemma, up came an old man, Obed-edom by name, and said unto them, "If ye cannot proceed with the Ark, let it turn aside, I pray you, into my house." It was accordingly brought into the house of Obed-edom, where it remained three months. David went home, and studied more carefully the law of the Lord, from which he learned that the Ark should be carried by the priests consecrated for that specific purpose, and not drawn by oxen. The Hebrew monarch, now deeply humbled, laid aside his royal apparel, clothed himself in a plain linen robe, like one of the common priests, and again assembled the musicians, singers, princes, nobles, and all the great men of the realm; and proceeded once more to bring the Ark to the royal city. The priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant, David led the van of the host, and the musicians followed; and the princes, nobles, and all the distinguished men of the kingdom brought up the rear. As they ascended Mount Zion to the royal residence, David addressed the Ark—the symbol of God's presence—in the words of our text: "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." But whatever reference this passage may have had originally to the ascent of the Ark, it is obvious from the application St. Paul makes of it, in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, that its full import can be realized only by

the triumphant ascension of the Lord Jesus. In its application to our ascended Lord, we use the text this morning.

I. WE HAVE THE GLORIOUS ASCENSION OF OUR DIVINE REDEEMER.

II. HIS TRIUMPHANT REIGN ; and

III. THE BLESSINGS CONSEQUENT ON HIS ASCENSION AND VICTORY.

The ascension of Jesus Christ was an event represented by type, and foretold by the prophets. There are many things connected with it demanding special attention. The *time* when it occurred was forty days after His resurrection. During this period, Jesus frequently appeared unto His disciples, and gave them the fullest evidence that He had risen from the dead. His disciples went everywhere preaching a risen Saviour ; allowing His enemies to carefully investigate their statements ; and, if false, undeceive those who had given credence to them. His ascension was *visible*. It was a real, local translation of the human body, and human soul of Jesus Christ from this world to the highest Heaven ; and was witnessed by both men and angels. The *scene* of His ascension was the Mount of Olives. It pleased the God-man—the Divine *Logos*—to reveal more of His humanity in connection with this Mount than anywhere else under Heaven. How often, after the toils and fatigue of the day in the wicked and captious city, did He repair to Bethany, situated on the eastern base of Olivet, to share the kind hospitality of Lazarus and his pious sisters ! There He laid aside the awful character of prophet and teacher Divine, to rest His hard-trying energies upon the gentle amenities of social life. Only thrice in the Bible have we an account

of Jesus weeping, and on each occasion it was on the Mount of Olivet. The first instance was when He sympathized and wept with the weeping sisters. There He blended his tears with those of sad bereavement; and with wonderful voice called Lazarus from the grave—voice wonderful indeed, for it startled the dull ear of death and made the inexorable grave deliver up its prey. The second time that Jesus wept was over the polluted city. From Olivet He beheld Jerusalem; He remembered her privileges and her sins; He saw her approaching doom; the sight affected His heart; the heart affected the eye; and he burst into a flood of tears, and wept over its infatuated people. The third time that Christ wept was in the garden of Gethsemane—at the foot of the Mount of Olives. None of the Evangelists make mention of His shedding tears on that occasion, though three of them give a detailed account of His agony. The omitted information is supplied by Paul, in Heb. v. 7: “Who in the days of His flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong *crying and tears*, unto Him that was able to save Him from death.”

On Olivet, Christ mounted the ass, and rode triumphantly to Jerusalem, amid the loud hosannas of the tumultuous throng. On this Mount, Jesus answered those three questions of His anxious disciples, pregnant with meaning: “Master, when shall there not be left one stone on another of that great temple, that shall not be thrown down?” “What shall be the sign of thy coming?” “And when will be the end of the world?” The answers to those questions are found in the wonderful revelations recorded in the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew. On Olivet the Master gave the great commission to His

disciples to evangelize the world. From Olivet He ascended to glory. It had witnessed some of the most marvellous exhibitions of His humanity; and it must behold a glorious display of Divine power.

The last act of Jesus before His ascension was to bless His disciples. He came to bless; lived to bless; died to secure blessings for our race; and ascended to Heaven with blessings dropping from His lips upon His Church. He led them out to Olivet, and, with more than princely dignity and pontifical authority, "He lifted up His hands and blessed them; and it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into Heaven." Had earth been possessed with ears adapted to celestial language, on that memorable occasion, as in jubilant pomp He ascended through the immeasurable concave of the Heavens, she might have heard His princely heralds surprise the waiting thrones of eternity with a voice of thunder, saying: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." Hark! the heavenly hierarchy within enquires, "Who is this King of Glory?" The angelic retinue without, reply: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." And then they reiterate their demand: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." Those within again ask: "Who is this King of Glory?" The celestial train without, once more reply: "The Lord of hosts; He is the King of Glory." Lo! the pearly gates of Heaven are thrown wide open; and Jesus, clothed with the glories of redemption, and attended by legions of mighty angels, enters, and ascends His throne amid the loudest jubilation of the

skies. The songs of triumph rise, and roll across all the Elysian plains of Paradise. Foremost, doubtless, in those joyous anthems, were the redeemed spirits from earth. Why? Because then, for the first time, they saw a human body, after passing through the chambers of death, glorified, and enthroned at the right hand of God. They saw the human and Divine nature, inseparately connected, and occupying the same throne in the Heavens. And in that glorified body of Jesus Christ, they beheld the pledge, the proof and the pattern, of their future and final glorification.

II. WE PROCEED NEXT TO CONSIDER CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT REIGN. "Thou hast led captivity captive." Allusion is here made to the custom among ancient nations of celebrating military triumph.

In days of ancient chivalry, when gallant generals led oriental armies in triumph over gory battle-fields, their grateful fellow-citizens were wont to do them honour by giving them, on their return home, a brilliant triumphal procession. No expense or labour was spared which would make the scene grand and imposing. The brave conqueror was borne in a gorgeously decorated war chariot, drawn by four white horses; the most illustrious personages in the vanquished army, including captains, princes, and kings, were bound to the chariot, and walked after it to grace the victor's triumph. As he approached the city, the wall was thrown down, signifying thereby that a city possessing such a hero had no need of other defence. Flushed with accumulating glories, he scattered gifts from the spoils of battle upon the people who swelled the procession. Jesus Christ is here represented as a great conqueror, having vanquished the powers of darkness, and

destroyed the hopes of hell, returning to the capital of the universe, and scattering blessings upon the redeemed and exulting Church. Indeed, the holy Scriptures frequently present Him in the character of a successful Warrior. As such He is brought before us in the celebrated enquiry of the evangelical prophet, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" And the conquering King replies, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." In the apocalyptic visions, St. John says he saw, when the first seal was opened, "and behold a white horse, and He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto Him, and He went forth conquering and to conquer." The Psalmist represents the Father as saying unto the Son, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And an inspired Apostle assures us, "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." Christ has enemies.

The enemies of the Divine Son are either temporal or spiritual—those persons and nations that visibly oppose the spread of truth and the prosperity of the Church, and those hidden powers that obstruct unseen the development of Christ's kingdom. Of the former class, in the early days of Christianity, were the Jews and the Romans. The one rejected, falsely accused, and delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles; the other put Him to death. After His crucifixion, both appear to have entered a confederacy for the extermination of the Christian cause. But both must fall before the march of His triumph. About forty years after His crucifixion the Jews were made the footstool of the victorious King, by the utter destruction of their temple, city, and the whole of their

polity. By successive persecutions the Romans aimed at blotting the Christian religion out of existence. In what is commonly called the tenth persecution, they struck a medal upon which was engraven, "Christianity abolished, and the worship of the gods established." Never did a more daring, impious sentence fall under the eye of earth or heaven. But was it true? As well might man try to stop the tides in their course, to pluck the planets from their sockets, or to demolish the eternal throne, and hurl from heaven its Occupant, as to destroy the Christian religion. It is in accordance with the laws of nature that waters ebb and flow, the planets revolve and shine; and it is in accordance with the unalterable decree of the Almighty that Christianity should speed and spread in boundless progress till the sweet melodies of redeeming love shall float on every breeze, and echo from every mountain. Soon emerging from its supposed grave, and invigorated by the blood of its martyrs, Christianity asserted its indistructible power, and the banner of the cross was unfurled over the whole Roman empire.

"Julian, the apostate," aimed at destroying Christianity by depriving the Church of schools and the means of education.

The fact that Christianity has to-day almost a monopoly of the literature of the world, is a standing evidence of the utter failure of his undertaking. He died fighting against the Persians. When mortally wounded, he took a handful of the blood flowing from his own veins, and threw it up towards heaven, in malignant hatred against Christ, saying, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!"

Sooner or later the same confession will be extorted from every foe, "He must reign till He has put all ene-

mies under His feet." "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty, and in Thy majesty—ride prosperously because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness." Ride on Thou mighty conquering Jesus, ride on, Thine enemies all subdue. Let the foes of Thy kingdom, and the haters of truth be scattered and perish at the glance of Thine eye.

At the present time the temporal enemies of Jesus Christ are Paganism, Mohammedanism, and Popery. These giant systems of error are all fated to a fearful doom.

The passing events of each successive year prognosticate unmistakably the infallible purposes of the Almighty in reference to the downfall of Romanism. The Moslem religion, which once wielded the destinies of nearly all Europe, and covered the fairest portion of Asia, is almost a thing of the past. Soon the Crescent will everywhere give place to the Cross, and the rich, crimson fold of the Christian banner will again float in triumph over the homaged birth-scene of the world's redemption. Paganism is smiling under the decrepitude of advancing years, the flush and vigour of life are gone. The diffusion of Bible truth, aggressive civilization, and ever increasing discoveries and inventions, are digging the grave of Heathenism.

The spiritual foes of the Divine Son are sin, Satan and death. Each claims the power of despotic royalty; and would fain exercise a universal and destructive reign. But Jesus Christ has already achieved a victory over these dark invisible powers, and He will yet effect their utter destruction. On the cross, when He made a grand and full atonement for human transgression, the brilliant vic-

tory was gained over sin and Satan. But Death, on his "pale horse" still will be the unvanquished enemy of man. It was not till the morning of the third day that his sceptre was broken. Then our conquering Lord met, and vanquished the "king of terrors" in his own domain, and rose in triumph, like a God. These spiritual foes have been *conquered*, but they must be *destroyed*. The struggle is in progress. The army of light, and the legions of darkness are in the field. Which shall ultimately triumph? When we look at the numerous false systems of religion flaunting their crime-stained banners in the face of virtue; at bold infidelity stalking over the earth with defiant mien; when we consider the cold formalism, the stupid indifference, the thirst for fashion and for gold invading the different branches of the Church, blind unbelief would suggest that sin, Satan, and death will finally triumph, and that error, crime and sin will inundate the whole world with their dark and turgid waves. But then the living light of Heaven's own truth flashes through the firmament of our minds, we ascend the mount of Christian vision, and with the eye of faith survey the whole continent of Divine promises, surrounded by an ocean of evidence that every one shall be fulfilled, and in jubilant anticipation we exclaim, "Christ shall ultimately triumph, for 'He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet!'"

He will effect the utter destruction of *sin* in all true believers. His mission was to "*save His people from their sins.*" He will save them from the guilt, the defilements, and the consequences of sin. Here on earth their *souls* will be emptied of all sin, and filled with "all the fullness of God."

He will destroy *Satan*. This usurper ambitiously

aimed at ruling the race, but Christ "shall destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil."

The king of the sepulchre was defeated at the resurrection of Jesus ; but he will be utterly destroyed at the general resurrection of the saints. "The last enemy that shall be *destroyed* is death." "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" Amid the effulgent glories of the resurrection morn, the saints of God will stand on the tomb of their final foe, and sing the victors' hymn, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law ; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then the body, freed from every trace of sin and from all its consequences, will shine illustrious as the sun ; and the whole army of the redeemed will ascend through parting heavens to their respective thrones. Each saint will bear the resplendent image of his Lord. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Christ will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." This then is the grand ultimate design of all Christ's triumphs—to re-stamp on man the Divine image, to make believers in *soul* and *body* like Himself.

III. THE BLESSINGS CONSEQUENT ON HIS ASCENSION AND VICTORY. "Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

The blessings bestowed are *general* and *special*. Christ

is the Saviour of *all men* ; but *especially of those that believe*. (1 Tim. iv. 10.) The general gifts are those imparted to the whole human family. These include the gifts of a kind Providence. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." They comprehend all the unconditional blessings in the economy of redemption. Christ is God's universal gift to the world. He has made an atonement for the sins of all. The Bible is a common gift to the race. The Holy Spirit in a certain measure is given to every man. He is sent into the world to "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." But there are special blessings bestowed upon those who comply with the conditions upon which God offers His saving grace to men. Such are the blessings of a *special* Providence, the heavenly renewal of our nature ; the direct witness of the Spirit, attesting our reconciliation with God, and all the daily benedictions of heaven. "And I will make them, and the place round about My hill, a blessing ; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season : there shall be showers of blessing." Religious teachers, and officers in the church are included in those special gifts. "He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the word of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Indeed, those gifts include salvation and heaven, with all that these comprehensive terms imply.

For what purpose are those gifts bestowed upon men ? "That the Lord God might dwell among them." God delights in having fellowship with His saints. Jesus said : "If a man love Me, he will keep My words ; and My

Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." The last comforting promise which fell from the Master's lips before His ascension was, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

"God resides among His own,
God doth in His saints delight."

But for what purpose does He impart His gifts to the rebellious? Is it that He may dwell with them also? That is, doubtless the ultimate design. True, Christ hath no concord with Belial, but He represents Himself as knocking at the door of the sinner's heart for admission, that He may enter and expel everything which is unlike God.

From this subject we learn a few very important lessons.

1. *From the ascension of Christ we learn that we have now a "Great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God, who is passed into the Heavens, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us according to the will of God."* "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." O sinner, your life is spared in the midst of your rebellion, because Jesus perpetually intercedes; and, O ye saints of God, this intercession is the procuring cause of all your graces and blessings.

2. *From the sovereignty of Christ, we learn our duty to Him as our King.* "The majesty of a king demands the obedience of the subject." If, therefore, we acknowledge

Christ as our King, let us render him a willing and unreserved obedience.

3. *From the triumphant reign of the Son of God, we learn our security under His protection.* If this mighty conquering Jesus is our King and the Captain of our Salvation, what need we fear? How often are we like Elisha's servant, when the Syrian hosts went up to Dothan to capture his master. When he saw the immense army, with horses and chariots, surrounding the city, he cried out with fear, saying: "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Elisha prayed: "Lord, open his eyes, that he may see." And the Lord opened the young man's eyes; and what did he see? All the mountain round about the prophet was covered with horses and chariots of fire—an army from the living Lord had come forth for his protection. Often in our gloomy thoughts we see only the mighty forces arrayed against us, and, in the disquietude of our souls, cry out: "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Oh thou compassionate Saviour, open our eyes that we may see; for "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

4. *From the fact that Christ has procured gifts for men, we learn the confidence with which we should approach the throne of grace.* I have read in the records of olden time, that Alexander, the conqueror of the world, had an intimate friend—a philosopher—who was in very straitened circumstances. Alexander, apprized of his poverty, wrote an order on his treasurer, signed his name, but left the amount blank, to be filled in by the philosopher himself. This was immediately sent to the poor man, who inserted a very large amount, and presented it to be cashed. The treasurer refused to pay the amount,

and upbraided the man with imposing on his master's generosity. When Alexander heard thereof, he commanded the money to be paid, and said he was delighted with the philosopher's way of thinking, and regarded his act as one of the greatest honour. "If," said he, "this man had only inserted a small sum, it would have shown that he thought I was either unable or unwilling to pay a large amount. But now that he has put in so much, it shows the man has lofty conceptions of the greatness of my benevolence, and the vastness of my wealth."

Do we not often dishonour God by our scanty petitions? We come to the mercy-seat as if we were afraid we would exhaust the Divine treasury, and bankrupt Heaven. Henceforth let us show by the minuteness and comprehensiveness of our petitions, that we have some proper conception of the provision made for our comfort and salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ. The infinite heart of our Divine Redeemer is gladdened by the free bestowment of munificent gifts. Honour Him by large requests. "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full."





THE CUSTODY OF THE HEART.

SERMON VIII.

By REV. H. BLAND, QUEBEC.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life.”—PROV. iv. 23.



IN this Divine command the heart is spoken of in terms very emphatic ; “out of it are the issues,” or goings forth, “of life.” Life is what the heart is. The outward man, if not in appearance yet in reality, is the reflection of the inward. The one is the stream ; the other the fountain—the one the branches ; the other the root. The life may be trimmed and modified and shaped to meet the requirements of the eye, but its moral texture and grain are the same as the heart. Given the heart, you have the man. Hence the command, “Keep thy heart with all diligence.”

Why keep the heart and *How keep it*, are the questions before us.

I. WHY KEEP THE HEART? Why not watch the lip and gauge the action and bridle the temper—why not

keep a strict and ceaseless vigilance over the outward man ; that which others see, and which alone can be to others a beacon of guidance—why not prominently and principally endeavour to secure a correct and harmonious life ? Has not Christ said : “ Let your light so shine *before* men, that others seeing,” &c. Then why not, in the first instance, specially guard and mature and beautify the life ? Because the light seen without must be first kindled and then fed from within—the works seen by men must be secretly germinated in the retirement of the heart. The life is either sweet or bitter ; light or dark ; wholesome or noxious, just as the controlling organ within is either the one or the other.

1. *The heart must be kept, in the first place, because it is the fountain of character.* During a visit which I made to the remote sections of the Belleville district, some ninety miles north of the town, I met with a farmer, who, on leaving the shores of the beautiful Bay of Quinte, had taken with him to his remote clearing in the woods a large quantity of apple seeds. These seeds were promiscuous ones—various kinds thrown together without assortment. The difference between the varieties was scarcely, if at all, perceptible, yet each seed was not only a potential apple tree, but an apple tree of a specific kind. Each seed would, under proper conditions of development, give its own kind of apple ; but that was the range of its capability—it would grow nothing but the apple—not a single seed that would spontaneously grow a peach, or even a pear. So with the human heart—if left to itself, that is, if unchanged by the Spirit of God, it invariably grows character of a specific kind, and that kind is always ungodly. It may be modified by disposition and

circumstance—in some more, in others less ungodly, but in every case naturally and essentially ungodly; and this ungodliness of character is as much the outgrowth of the heart, as the apple tree is the outgrowth of the seed.

Doubtless some, while acknowledging the prevailing imperfection of human character—acknowledging it because they cannot do otherwise—would fain account for it in any way rather than on the ground of the moral and native unsoundness of the heart, but its uniformity and universality show that it is in the seed, and not in the training.

The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, in a letter to a friend, touches the point most significantly. “Since I began this letter I have had some of the troubles of school keeping, and one of those specimens of the evil of boy nature which makes me always unwilling to undergo the responsibility of advising any man to send his son to a public school. * * * The exceedingly small number of boys that can be relied on for active and steady good, * * * makes me strongly feel exemplified what the Scriptures say about the ‘Strait Gate’ and the ‘wide one,’—a view of human nature which, when looking on human life in its full dress of decencies and civilizations, we are apt, I imagine, to find it hard to realize. But here, in the nakedness of boy nature, one is quite able to understand how there could not be found so many as ten righteous in a whole city. And how to meet this evil, I really do not know; but to find it thus rife after I have been so many years fighting against it, is so sickening, that it is very hard not to throw up my work in despair. But then the stars of nobleness which I see amid the darkness, in the case of the few, are so cheering, that

one is inclined to stick to the ship again, and have another good tug at getting her about."

Arnold's experience, so honestly expressed, corresponds with that of every unprejudiced student of human nature. A learned and amiable gentleman in one of the cities of the United States, and who professed to believe in the inherent goodness of the heart, though very fond of Thackeray as a writer, was displeased with the humiliating representations which the great satirist gave of human society. To a mutual friend—a friend whose disposition was equally strong to believe in the native goodness of the heart, he candidly and somewhat passively said: "Thackeray makes me so much out of love with mankind, that I have determined to read him no more." He could not disprove his truthfulness—he was obliged to acknowledge the fidelity of the literary photographer, but, like the ostrich pursued by the hunter, he preferred to hide his head in the bush, and imagine himself and all others right, rather than manfully look the unwelcome facts of man's natural degeneracy full in the eye. But I wonder how this individual managed when he turned from the pages of the satirist to those of the historian—from the satirist who sketches character, to the historian who chronicles fact—particularly those historians who are somewhat microscopic in their revelations, and who bring to light the minuter lines of thought and action. Take for instance Macaulay or Froude. Again and again while going leisurely through the latter, and noticing how men and women acted three centuries ago—by the way so very much like what they do now—have I experienced a feeling of sadness that the historian in his accurate glance at society should find so much that is crooked and bad.

From whence springs this unconcealable, this acknowledged, this uniform shadiness of human character? From training? From example? No; both of these are palpably inadequate. We are compelled to go where the Bible goes. Christ, the master psychologist, says, "Out of the *heart* proceed * * * the things which defile a man." And that which is true of ungodly character, is equally true of godly. The heart is the root power in both cases. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Heart and character stand in the same relation as tree and fruit—the one is what the other is, spontaneously, uniformly, essentially. But you say, "Has the will nothing to do in the formation of character?" It has a great deal to do; character is the immediate product of the will, but then the will is conditional, prompted and controlled by the heart. Let the will of the unrenewed heart desire to do something better—let it, prompted by conscience in its better mood, protest against the downward tendency, and its comparative powerlessness shows where the strength of the man lies. "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Hence Christ says, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, and the things which defile a man," shewing that the heart is the central force of the man, and dominates over his entire being. And could that which is mere surfaceism be removed from society, and character be mentally dissected, the skilful anatomist would find concealed under a great many modifications just two classes, and only two; the one Godward in its tendency, the other worldward; and the state of the heart, renewed or unrenewed, the secret of both. How needful the 3000 years old prayer, "Create

in me a *clean heart*, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me."

2. *But again, the heart ought to be kept, because it is the King of the Intellect.* We are apt to think of the intellectual part of man as distinct from, and superior to, his emotional—as a region calmer, loftier, and more reliable in its action—as a department of the man with which truth, and not impulse, has to do. Appeals to the intellect are regarded as legitimate and proper ; appeals to the heart are deemed sensational and unworthy. But is it so ? Is this the relative position of the two great forces ? I think not ; intellect, so far from being distinct from, and superior to, the heart, is in many of its most important acts the very opposite—dependent upon, and controlled by it. What is some times called free thought, and exulted in as such, is in many respects anything but free—it is the servile interpreter and mouthpiece of the heart—a mere telegraphic machine played upon by the fingers of the subtle operator within. The Bible does not say, "as a man thinketh" in his intellect "so is he," but, with a profounder knowledge of human nature, its deliverance is, "as a man thinketh in his *heart* so is he." Christ, who knew what was in man, said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." The heart is not the seat of thought—that is the province of the intellect—but the intellect as a vassal, subject to a superior power, thinks as the heart dictates. We have a most pertinent illustration of this given us by Dr. Nelson in his work on Infidelity. A young man inquired of him what authors on the evidences of Christianity he chiefly recommended. The doctor said to him, "I have a choice, but it is not so marked as to fix on any given volumes indispensably. He told me

that he should read six or eight of the first books I should send him, and the Bible afterwards, with an approved commentary. The following are, as nearly as I can remember, the books which I obtained and sent or carried to him, one as soon as he had finished the other :—Alexander's Evidences, Paley's Evidences, Watson's Answer to Paine, Jews' Letter to Voltaire, Horner's Introduction, Vol. I., and Faber's Difficulties of Infidelity. Before he was entirely through with these books, he told me that he had something to say of himself that was indeed singular. 'I am,' said he, 'in a strange condition. I will confess to you frankly and honestly that these authors have not answered and fairly overturned every difficulty and every objection which I had mustered and opposed to the Bible as being from God. Furthermore, I do acknowledge that I have found arguments in favour of its Divine authority so plain and so momentous that I am unable to meet or to answer them, and yet *I do not believe the Bible*,—I cannot, and *I do not, believe the Bible.*' How was this? Why could he not believe the Bible? Was not his intellect convinced? Did he not find the arguments unanswerable and conclusive? Then why could he not believe the Bible? Because the heart, in its perversity and simple dislike, asserted its lordship, and refused to be accessible to the plainest evidence. The intellect thought one way, the heart thought another; and as the heart, on that question, was king—the controlling power of the man—so as he *thought* in his *heart* was he.

This simple fact contains a principle of luminous but solemn import. It explains a great deal that would otherwise be perplexing. A captain of a ship was once seriously out in his reckoning—he found himself many

leagues astray, and had he not discovered his mistake the consequences might have been fearful. But the question with him was, how was it that he got astray. His observations were good, and his calculations, so far as he could see, faultless. He was painfully perplexed. What happened once might happen again. Where was the error? And it was only after the most careful investigation that, to his surprise, but belief, he found that a piece of iron had been accidentally placed so near the ship's compass as to disturb its action, and falsify its indications. The compass of the ship had lost truth. And in no other way than this can I account for the intellectual blunders of men otherwise eminent. Pantheism, Positivism, Darwinism, and other shades of rationalistic thought, may be traced in the main to the kingship of a perverted heart. The heart dislikes the idea of a God, and forthwith the intellect tries to make it out that there is no such a being.

"Do you believe in God?" said recently the correspondent of the *London Times* to an eminent Communist in Paris. "No." "Why?" "Because it is not Republican. It would be one man power. If there were such a place as Heaven, and I went there and found a God, I would immediately commence throwing up barricades; I would hoist the red flag; I would rebel." That is a bad heart raving the grossest 'Atheism.

In others, where the idea of a God is disliked, but who are not atheistically communistic, the intellect tries to shut Him out of the universe in a more subtle way, and labours to account for the existence of everything without Him. The highest form of life, they say, is only a development of a lower form, and that again of one still more rudimentary—all living organisms sprung originally

from a piece of jelly, called a protoplasm. This is a bad heart talking philosophy and vain deceit.

Others again, like the eminent scientist who occupied the chair of the British Association for the Advancement of Science during its Edinbro' sessions, and who cannot deny the existence and evidences of a God, nevertheless remove Him as far away from the world as possible, and tell us very gravely that all earth's life has proceeded from seed-bearing meteoric stones, which have casually, in some remote age, struck this planet from some other planet. Ah ! intellect, though clothed in royal robes, is a poor thing when a deceived heart holds the sceptre. You have seen a paper wheel placed over a heated stove, and a paper man, wonderfully life-like, busily engaged in turning it round ; but it is not the man that moves the wheel, but the wheel that moves the man. So, the intellect, with its coat off and its brow bathed in perspiration, may seem as if it swayed the heart, but under the subtle imperial influence of the latter, the former is, on many questions, as perfect an automaton as a paper man who moves just as he is moved upon. The heart is the real seat of power, whether the face of the man is upward or downward—heavenward or earthward.

3. *But again, the heart is the Controller of Action.* As a rule, what it speaks is done—what it commands, the man obeys. The poet Southey tells us that in his irreligious college days he hated the bell which announced the hour of worship. And why did he hate the bell ? Not because it was a *bell*, but because it was a *worship* bell—a bell that talked about the Bible and sin, and Christ and death and eternity, and therefore he hated what might otherwise have been agreeable. Another poet,

who occupied a social position far higher than the one to which Southey was subsequently elevated, being not a poet laureate but a poet king—who flourished some years before Southey was born, and whose heart had acquired new tastes and new leanings—was summoned to public worship, not by a bell, but by a living human voice, and while the former poet hated the summons, the latter hailed it. “I was *glad* when they said unto me, come let us go up unto the house of the Lord.” And what was it that made the difference in each case? Simply the state of the heart. And this aversion in the one case, and delight in the other, as far as circumstances permitted, determined the action.

Now then, let us take a test of another kind, and instead of the worship of God let us take a modern pleasure party, with its dance, and music, and flutter and gaiety. The invitation is given—say two young men are invited to be present. The one accepts, the other declines. Both are professedly religious young men, and both wish eventually to gain eternal life. What constitutes in this case the dividing line? What is it that turns the face of one downward toward Sodom, the other upward toward Zoar? Simply the state of the heart. The heart, in the one case, is unchanged—clings to the pleasures of sin, and refuses to see any harm in a promiscuous dancing party—the heart in the other is tremulous with the sympathetic love of Jesus, and shrinks instinctively from the torpedo touch of evil, however glowing and plausible its aspect. The heart in each case is a *gulf stream*, but while the stream in the one is silently tending to death and night, bearing its possessor almost unconsciously along with it, the great forces of the other are floating onward to life and day.

4. *But again, the heart is the determiner of destiny.* Death has no purifying power. Death does not transform the man. It simply sends him on to eternity to be for ever what he has been here. The state of the heart in time absolutely determines the position of the man in eternity. If death finds the heart holy, nothing that follows will deteriorate it—if death finds the heart filthy, nothing that follows will purify it. In time, and in time only, the heart weaves the web of immortal weal or immortal woe. “Keep thy heart with all diligence.” Why? Let the weighty answer be pondered: “for out of it are the issues” or goings forth “of life.”

A report of a somewhat singular discussion was put into my hands lately. It took place in Boston, in the parlour of a certain lady, and was conducted by a select number of the freethinking literati of that city. The subject was, the function of the heart in religion, and a more pitiable exhibition of darkening counsel by words with knowledge, it has rarely been my lot to meet with. The heart was made the seat of something like poetic sensibility, of which some people may have naturally a great deal, and others none. Religion, whatever they meant by it, was a thing completely outside the heart. The great function of the heart, or the seat and centre of love to Jesus, or repugnance to Him, was completely ignored—a function that in the hour of death and day of judgment will determine the destiny of the man. The heart in which the love of Christ burns brightly, is the ready virgin who passes through the open door into the marriage feast; but the heart cold and estranged from Christ is the foolish one, who finds the door irrevocably shut, and in answer to whose appeal, the solemn voice is heard, “I know not whence ye are.”

Why keep the heart? A fourfold reason has been given. The heart is the fountain of character, the king of the intellect, the controller of action, and the determiner of destiny, "out of it are the issues" or goings forth "of life." As the thermometer and the temperature agree, so do the heart and the man. The one in reality is an exact counterpart of the other. As the heart is now, so the man is in the eye of God, good or bad—as the heart is when the body dies, so will the man be forever, right or wrong, happy or miserable, to eternity.

II. OUR SECOND QUESTION IS ONE IN WHICH WE HAVE A DEEP PRACTICAL INTEREST. HOW KEEP IT?

How is this imperial function to be kept? What can we do with a power so subtle, so persuasive, and so controlling? The literal rendering of the word "keep" will help us. This word in the Hebrew has a threefold shade of meaning. To keep means first, to put it in a safe place; second, to watch; third, to defend—three thoughts very suggestive.

I. First, then, *put the heart in a safe place.* As the planetary system was put in a safe place, when the Almighty and All-wise-One surrounded it by the well balanced forces of attraction and repulsion, and said to it by the gentle might of law, "so far shalt thou go, but no further." Or as the motion of a watch is put in a safe place when properly regulated and balanced by spring and wheel and pin. If a watch keeps improper time it is not only useless but misleading. To keep it, is to place it in a proper condition for doing its work. Or as a steam-engine is put in a safe place when the whole of its parts are as harmoniously perfect as science can make them, and under the controlling hand of one skilful and discreet.

A steam-engine without proper control may be an element of fearful mischief. To "keep" the heart is to have the whole of its powerful action properly regulated and under fitting sway.

Its natural condition is an unsafe one. Its functions and forces are obedient to the hand of a usurper. This usurper is "the prince of the power of the air"—"the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." This spirit of evil controls the energies and marshals the forces of the heart with a masterly and fiendish power; and this he does with such profound subtlety, that the subject of his sway fancies itself in its volitions and movements as free as the air.

Into whose hands then shall we commit the custody of this usurped domain—where is the safe place into which we may put it? One perfectly competent supplies the answer. "My son *give ME* thine heart." We know whose voice that is. With the tenderness of a father He asks for that which He has a right to claim. As much as if He had said: "Thine heart is bad in itself and is in bad hands. A usurper sways it. It is restless, discontented and occasionally full of remorse. Now and then dost thou attempt to regulate it, but without success. The downward inclination is too strong, and the sway of the usurper too masterly. Give *Me* thine heart. I will forgive its sin—I will break its yoke—I will cleanse its impurities—I will make it what it has never yet been, peaceful, radiant, and a never-failing fountain of benediction and love. Give *Me* thine heart."

Ah! my brother, never will thy heart and mine find their true orbit until they swing through the clear and healthy atmosphere of duty under the inspiration of the

cross. The only safe place for the heart of man is inside the heart of Jesus, and the only safe controlling power is for Jesus to be inside the man. Brother, bring your heart to Jesus. Bathe it with the light of the cross. Purify it with the blood of the cross. Let the sweet influences of Divine love harmoniously impel and restrain it.

“ A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine,
Perfect and right and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine.”

2. *Not only put it in a safe place, but watch it—watch it with a loving and prayerful eye.* It not only needs to be put into a safe position, but kept there. It is fallible; liable to err; in danger of faltering in its allegiance. Constant cultivation only will keep it covered with the flower and fruit of a charming, beauteous life. The steady hand and watchful eye of Christian diligence are needful to keep it in harmony with the cross. An old man with whom I was conversing, while travelling in a remote part of the Province of Quebec, on the necessity of giving the heart to Christ, unconsciously uttered a weighty truth when he said: “I do give my heart to Christ but it comes back to me again.” The heart was put at the foot of the cross, but the hand that put it there grew weary in well-doing. Diligently “keep” the heart. Let not the spirit of indolence or error damage its relationship to Jesus.

3. But, finally, *defend the heart*—defend it self-denyingly and vigorously against all injurious influences. Enemies swarm around it—foes, bitter, powerful and determined. As the patriotic advisers of a nation defend its interests and maintain its honour, and suffer no hostile hand to

touch the ark of national integrity and freedom—as the man of business defends his character and shields his interests against fraud or misfortune, so the heart, that nation in miniature, that essence of character, must be ubiquitously defended. The kings of Media built in the northern part of the empire a treasure city called Ecbatana, surrounded by seven circles of walls, strongly fortified, the battlement of each circle rising higher than the one outside of it. The top of the first, or outermost circle, was painted white, the next black, the third scarlet, the fourth blue, the fifth orange, the two last were coated respectively with silver and gold. Inside the wall that was coated with gold were the palace and the treasure house. Enemies might gaze upon this Median Ecbatana, and while stricken with its beauty they were awed with its impregnable-ness. So let it be with the Ecbatana of the heart—battlement it with a sevenfold circle of defence—let each circle be broader and grander than the one outside of it, and let the innermost circle be coated with the fine gold of *all prayer*, glistening with the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, a terror to evil-doers, but a thing of beauty to good men and angels. “Keep thy heart,” or as the margin reads, *above all keeping* “keep thy heart”—as something infinitely more precious than the treasure-house of kings.

Is then “thine heart right?” Let that be our first acquirement. Let us bring it to Christ. Let the cleansing blood be applied by faith. A decent church mannerism—a certain amount of creditable perfunctory religious routine we may have, but what humanity and the church need, are the mighty, transforming pulsations of millions of pure hearts. If the heart is faint with sin, the

head will be sick with error, and the conduct smitten with infirmity and defeat. If David had kept his heart, the two great sins of his life would never have darkened his character. If Achan had kept his heart, the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment would have had no fascination for him. If Demas had kept his heart, he would not have forsaken the companionship of Paul and the service of Christ, for the silver mire of the world and its atmosphere of death. And if the millions now professedly Christian, who are doing next to nothing for Christ, had felt the joy and power of a heart abidingly clean, the subjugation of the world to the Saviour would be only measureably distant. Incomparably the most germinant thought that I can leave with you is, first, a *pure heart*, and second, the maintenance of that purity, in all its evangelizing integrity, until the work of earth shall be exchanged for the rest of heaven.





CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.

SERMON IX.

By REV. W. S. BLACKSTOCK.

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us : therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—I COR. v. 7, 8.



HE doctrine of the atonement occupies a central and fundamental position in Christian theology. The cross is the central point toward which every one of the lines of inspired truth converges, and in which they all centre. From the first sacrifice offered by Adam at the gate of Eden immediately after his expulsion from the garden, to the morning sacrifice offered the day that the Redeemer died, every victim appointed to bleed was a silent witness to the truth that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. Each in its turn uttered a prophecy of the Lamb of God who in the fulness of time was to appear, and to suffer and die to take away the

sins of the world. Each of these sacrifices was a type of Him who was predestinated to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows ; to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities ; to bear the chastisement of our peace ; and to receive those stripes by which we are healed. In every sin-offering under the law, He was typically represented and set forth, who, though He knew no sin—was, in fact, sinless, unsinning, and incapable of sin—was made a sin-offering for us, and, as such, “suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,” “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

Some of these types were more striking and impressive than others, but among them all there was none more so than the paschal lamb, referred to by the Apostle, and in allusion to which Christ is called “our passover.” The whole ceremony of the offering of this sacrifice was strikingly symbolical and prophetic, not only of the atonement, but also of all the associated doctrines of Christianity. Like the Eucharist, or Lord’s Supper, which has taken its place, it was a visible embodiment of all the peculiar and distinctive doctrines of revealed religion ; a silent but impressive exhibition of the wondrous scheme of human redemption, in which the central figure was Christ—Christ crucified, Christ suffering, bleeding, dying, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life.

The paschal feast is done away ; it has given place to the Christian Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, an ordinance equally appropriate and impressive as a visible representation of the great central truths of our holy religion ; but the truth which was made visible in the passover will never die. There was in it a prophecy of an event the

most stupendous in the history of the world ; an event which was probably the sublimest exhibition ever made, or that ever will be made of the justice, wisdom and love of God ; an event which constitutes the goal of human history, in which all the interests of the ages centre, and upon which the hopes of all the generations of mankind rest. That prophecy has been fulfilled. That event has actually taken place. That to which the Passover taught and encouraged the Hebrew worshippers to look forward, as an object of hope, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper teaches us to look back to as an accomplished fact ; what was prophecy to him, is history to us ; and what he saw as through a glass darkly—knowing in part and prophecying in part—having some dim perception of the thing itself, but only guessing darkly at the manner of its accomplishment, it is our precious privilege to contemplate as a finished transaction, which, in all its details, stands out clearly and distinctly on the illuminated page of inspired history for us to study it at our leisure.

The central truth of the verses which I have read as a text is expressed in these three words, "Christ our Passover ;" and if I have not mistaken its import, it is not only the central truth of this particular passage, but of the whole Christian system. It is one of those subjects which it becomes us to approach with the deepest reverence, humbly invoking the aid of the Eternal Spirit that we may be divinely guided in our meditations, and that the truths which are wrapped up in it may not only find an entrance to our understandings but to our hearts.

To understand this subject fully, it will be necessary for us to briefly advert to the origin and nature of the Passover. Its institution was connected with one of the

most solemn passages in the strange and eventful history of the Hebrew people. Of that marvellous succession of wonderful interpositions of divine power and grace by which Egyptian pride was humbled, the iron yoke of the oppressor was broken, and enslaved Israel was set free, the most appalling was reserved for the last. Each successive blow inflicted upon the Egyptians and their idolatrous system was more terrible than that which preceded it ; at each successive stroke of the rod of the Almighty their misery was increased, and their humiliation became more complete ; but the last plague which they brought upon themselves by their obstinacy and rebellion filled up the cup of trembling put into their hands, and literally filled the whole land with "lamentation, mourning and woe ;" when, in a single night, all the first-born of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat upon his throne, to the first-born of the maid-servant behind the mill, and the first-born of beasts, were destroyed by the avenging stroke of the Almighty.

As if to heighten the horror of the occasion, the time selected was night. There have been many sad nights in the history of our race, in which tragedies so appalling have taken place that the contemplation of them almost causes the blood to curdle in one's veins ; but certainly there never was a night in the history of any individual, nation or people so replete with horror as that was to the Egyptians. The sun, it is probable, went down that evening with its accustomed brightness, and as its last rays lingered upon pyramid and palace, upon tower and temple, little did the thousands who gazed with admiration upon the dazzling splendour suppose that before his returning beams gilded the eastern sky, and opened the eye of

the morning, an event would have taken place which would have carried terror into every Egyptian home and every Egyptian heart. All was calm and still. The majestic Nile rolled on with its wonted regularity in its accustomed course. No evil omen appeared in earth or sky. Nothing in nature gave any indication of approaching change. The millions of the land, no doubt, retired to rest with their accustomed feeling of security, and probably during the earlier watches of the night they slept as soundly, and their rest was as calm and refreshing as it had ever been. But notwithstanding this deceitful calm, and the false security which it inspired, the angel of death had received his commission, and, with dark and sullen wing outspread, hovered over the guilty and doomed people, ready to strike a blow which was to pierce every heart through and through with the keenest anguish, and to lay the pride and glory of every family in the dust. An act of vengeance was to be executed which was never to perish from the pages of human history, and was to be a witness to all ages of the terrible majesty of God, and of His severity as an avenger of sin.

But that night the dwellings of the enslaved Hebrews presented a novel and singular appearance. A transaction was taking place in each of them which could scarcely fail to attract the attention, and provoke the derision of their heathen neighbours ; but which was nevertheless of great significance and importance to themselves. In each house, except the family was very small, in which case it joined with its neighbours, a lamb was killed and his blood sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintel, or cross-beam over the door. The sprinkled blood was the divinely appointed sign and seal of the covenant

which the Lord made with them that their first-born should not perish with the first-born of Egypt, that the destroying angel who was commissioned to take vengeance upon their oppressors, was not to touch any of them. Every dwelling upon the door-posts and lintel of which the blood should be found was to be passed over ; the messenger of death was to have no power to hurt any one there. How solemn and momentous was this transaction, and what feelings of reverence and awe must it have inspired in all the dwellings of Jacob !

After the sprinkling of the blood, the lamb was roasted and eaten ;—roasted whole, “his head, his legs and the appurtenances thereof,” not a bone of him being broken, or any dismemberment or mutilation of him having taken place ;—roasted with fire, and the whole of him eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs ;—eaten as a pilgrim’s meal, hurriedly, each person standing while he ate, having his shoes on, his loins girt, and his staff in his hand, as if ready for the march. Now the application of all this to “Christ our Passover” is natural and easy. The points of resemblance between the type and the anti-type, between the paschal lamb and the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, are too obvious to require any special sagacity to discover them, or any special ingenuity to point them out. They are too numerous and important, however, to be treated fully in a single discourse. Let us therefore rapidly note a few of the more striking and important particulars in which the analogy may be traced.

I. CHRIST IS OUR SHELTER FROM IMPENDING RUIN ; HE IS OUR SHIELD FROM THE AVENGING STROKE OF A JUSTLY ANGRY GOD ; HIS SACRIFICE IS THAT WHICH

STANDS BETWEEN US AND THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF OUR VIOLATION OF THE DIVINE LAW. "In Him," and in Him alone, "we have redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of sins." His was the blood without the shedding of which there could be "no remission." The proclamation had gone forth, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The irrevocable word had passed the lip of Jehovah, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Partial obedience is an impossibility; "For whosoever keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one *point*, is guilty of all." Nothing but an exact and perfect obedience, complete both in spirit and in act, combining purity of motive with purity of action, could meet the requirement of the divine law, and establish a legal claim to the favour and blessing of God, and exemption from the bitter consequences of sin. But, without question, such an obedience is beyond the reach of any human soul since the Fall. In this sense "There is none righteous, no, not one;" "every mouth is stopped, all the world is guilty before God." To the eye of Him who sees the end from the beginning, to whom the past and the future, with the passing moment, are equally present, every human soul, from Adam down to the last of his descendants who shall ever stand upon the earth, stands forth clearly and distinctly condemned as a transgressor; "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in His sight." It was this sad and terrible state of things which made the atonement a necessity. It was to meet this solemn and tremendous exigency that God in the infinitude of His compassion and love "gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him

should not perish, but have everlasting life." It was to turn away the vengeful stroke from us, consistently with the claims of law and the requirements of justice, that He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him ; " whom He hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, *I say*, at this time the righteousness of God : that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." " He is the propitiation for our sins." He, in His proper sacrificial character as " the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," is the only hope set before the guilty—the only refuge to which he can fly from the vengeance which pursues the transgressor, and in which he can find safety. " Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." We are absolutely shut up to Him as our only way of escape. The destroying angel, the executioner of divine wrath, is upon our track, and nothing can shield us from the impending blow but the " mercy-sprinkling blood." It is the atonement alone which stands between us and wrath. It is the blessed truth that " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation," which constitutes the only ground of a sinner's hope. But we need no other ; " For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh : how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge our con-

science from dead works to serve the living God." If the typical sacrifice effected a ceremonial purification by which the person separated for uncleanness was restored to the privilege of approaching God and taking part in the services of the tabernacle and temple, how much more shall the real sacrifice, of which these were but so many shadows, effect that great expurgation, typified by the ceremonial purifications under the law? Or shall the shadow exceed the substance, the type hold good, and the antitype, from which it derived all its significance, fail? Shall the blood of the paschal lamb, sprinkled upon the door-post and lintel, preserve the house of the Hebrew from the visit of the destroying angel, and shall the blood of Christ fail to secure to those who trust in it that deliverance of which all the deliverances granted to God's ancient people were but so many types? Brethren, behold the Lamb of God! Consider the dignity of His person, and the greatness of His humiliation; remember, too, that He was the divinely appointed sacrifice for sin, virtually slain from the foundation of the world, and accepted before it was offered—nay, that it was both offered and accepted, in the divine purpose, from eternity; therefore, whether we can or cannot understand the philosophy of this great transaction, we have in it the amplest ground of encouragement and hope in coming to God for the forgiveness of our sins. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

2. *Christ is the life, the strength, the support of the souls of his people.* The sacrificing of Himself for us was not designed merely to change our relation to God, but to impress upon our souls a new character, and make us the partakers of a new life. Sin had not only involved us in guilt, brought us under the displeasure of God, and exposed us to the penalty which divine justice has attached to the transgression of the law of God, but it had introduced disorganization and ruin into the soul itself. Just as in the case of the body separated from the soul, the process of decomposition inevitably follows, and physical corruption is the invariable result; so, with the soul separated from God, deprived of the principle of vitality, and cut off from the source of its life, moral disorganization and spiritual corruption inevitably follow. Hence, as in a matter of fact, every human soul, in its isolation from Christ, is not only guilty but also depraved; or, to use a theological distinction, it is not only judicially, but also spiritually dead. It is not only under condemnation and sentence of death, but, so far as the highest life is concerned—the life of God in the soul—it is actually dead. The salvation of the soul, therefore, not only includes the pardon of sin and the removal of its liability to punishment, but also a spiritual resurrection from the dead. In both these senses Christ is our life. By him the sentence recorded against us is reversed, and we are spiritually quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. The moment we become vitally united to Him by faith we not only pass into a new relation but also into a new spiritual state; there is not only now no condemnation, but the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death. In that moment we really

begin to live. In the instant of the soul's contact with Him it passes from death unto life. And as He is our life in its inception, so is He in its sustentation, progress, and completion ; for He is not only come that we might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly ; not merely that our souls should be quickened into "newness of life," but that that life should be sustained, developed, matured, and perfected. As it was by receiving Him into our hearts by faith that we became the partakers of this hidden spiritual life at first, in the very same way is its stability and growth to be promoted. He is "the bread of life," that "living bread" which if any man eat he shall live forever. As the paschal lamb eaten by the Israelites imparted, in a natural way, physical strength to their bodies, Christ received by faith imparts spiritual strength and supernatural vigour to the soul. He is the head of the body, of which every one of His people is a member, and from which each of the members has its life. He is the true vine, of which each of His people is a branch, and from which all the branches draw that vitalizing sap by which their life is sustained, and their fruitfulness is promoted. He is the food of the souls of His people by which the waste of every day's wear and tear is repaired, its vigour is maintained, and its growth is promoted. His spirit in them is the real recuperative force by which the vital energy of their spirits is restored, so that, though the outward man perish the inward man is renewed day by day. What the manna was to the Israelites in the wilderness, Christ is to His people in all ages ; and the stream issuing from the smitten rock which followed them in all their journeyings, giving them daily refreshment and strengthening, was but a type of that never-failing stream

of mercy and blessing which flows to us from Him who was "wounded for our transgressions." Without those supernatural supplies by which their daily wants were met, the Israelites could not have subsisted in the wilderness ; without those continued miraculous interpositions of Divine Providence they would have inevitably perished long before they reached the promised land ; and in all this their case was typical of ours, and aptly represents our absolute and continued dependence upon Christ.

3. *But if we would avail ourselves of either the shielding or the life-giving, invigorating and supporting benefit of the Redeemer's passion, there must be on our part a personal appropriation of Him and His merit.* The presence of the paschal lamb, and even the shedding of his blood, were not alone sufficient for the protection of the Hebrew household, and the procurement of the Divine blessing : his blood must be sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintel, and his flesh must be roasted with fire and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. This was God's covenant with them : "The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are ; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." The sprinkled blood was, as I have said, the sign and seal of the covenant of grace which God made with them. Without this the Hebrews would have shared the same fate with the Egyptians ; not one of their dwellings would have been passed over, but the angel of destruction would have just as certainly executed his sanguinary commission upon the one as the other. Doubtless to many a sceptical heart that night unbelief whispered, as it often whispers to us, respecting matters appointed by God but which we

do not fully understand, "*What use?*" But to all such sceptical and presumptuous questioning there was this one sufficient answer: *God hath required it.* They were not saved by their understanding or their reason, but by their faith. Their confidence in God produced in them child-like submission to His authority and obedience to His commandments; and the result was that though they dwelt literally in the region and shadow of death, they were safe. Brethren, these things were written for our learning. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. God Himself has provided the lamb without blemish in the person of Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Him, "being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, His enemies have taken with wicked hands and crucified and slain." The expiatory sacrifice has been offered and the satisfaction is complete. But all this will avail us nothing except our own individual souls are brought into personal contact with the atonement by faith—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVER-LASTING LIFE;" but "he that believeth not, is condemned already," and will just as certainly perish as if the ransom had not been paid. "To him that worketh not but believeth in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness;" but he that believeth not is involved in guilt and condemnation, and if he continues in his unbelief will be inevitably and eternally lost. Faith is the receptive faculty of the soul, and the alternative presented to each of us is nothing more or less than this, *Receive Christ and live, reject Him and die.* There must, therefore, be upon the part of every one who would

be made a partaker of the benefits of the Redeemer's passion such a belief of the truth, by the power of the Spirit of God, as is implied in a penitent renunciation of sin, the absolute and irrevocable submission to the will of God, the abandonment of every other ground of hope, and the transference of the soul's undivided confidence to Him who is the propitiation for our sins, a personal closing with Christ on the terms of the Gospel, the embracement of Him as "the Lord our righteousness," and the confident recumbency of the soul upon Him as the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, and the highest expression of His Father's love. Faith is the assimilating faculty by which Christ is taken up into the soul in such a way as to become its nourishment, its strength, its support, its life. It is by the exercise of this grace, that the believer feeds upon Christ daily in his heart with thanksgiving; and his whole life and being becomes so united to Him and blended with him, that, with a full realization of the deep meaning of the words which he employs, he can say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

But, brethren, before this blessed experience can be obtained, Christ must be received *in His entirety*, without dismemberment or mutilation. Not a bone of Him must be broken. He must be received in all His offices, as our prophet, our priest, and our king; He must be accepted in His humiliation as well as in His exaltation, on the cross as well as upon the throne; as the rejected of men, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as well as the Jehovah Christ, worshipped by

all the angels of God, and invested with the glory of universal dominion, the "King of kings and the Lord of lords."

4. *If we would appropriate the saving merit of Christ's death we must receive Him in the spirit of penitential self-renunciation, accepting the sacrifice, the service, and the suffering, as well as the benefits and blessings which are inseparable from union with Him in this world.* The paschal lamb must be eaten with the bitter herbs. The Saviour must be accepted with whatever of bitterness there may be connected with the experience and lot of the believer on earth. He has Himself prescribed the terms upon which we may be His disciples: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Christ never yet became the Saviour of an impenitent soul, or of one who refused to accept Him with His yoke, His burden, and His cross. The stern necessity of repentance meets us at the very threshold of the Christian life. We must have real poverty of spirit before we can be made the partakers of the true riches. It is only to them who mourn on account of their sins, and their estrangement from God, that the promise is made that they shall be comforted. It is only to those who painfully feel their emptiness of all that is good, and who hunger and thirst after righteousness, that the promise is made that they shall be filled. It is to the meek, those whose chastened souls are brought down into the dust, and who, in the humility, docility, and gentleness which result from a complete realization of their ignorance, weakness, poverty, and dependance, are prepared to submit themselves implicitly to Him, and follow Him with a child-like faith, that Christ regards Himself as being

pecially anointed to preach good tidings, and to whom He makes that glorious promise which doubtless is to be taken in its most spiritual, its divinest sense, that "they shall inherit the earth." That there are bitter experiences connected with His service He has never sought to conceal from us ; but on the contrary He hath Himself suffered, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. It is true we have the amplest assurance of comfort and support in our sufferings, and a happy issue out of them at last ; nay more, that they will turn out to be the most precious privileges, the richest blessings—an important part of that "all things" which work together for our good, working for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ;" but still the fact remains that we must suffer with Him if we would be glorified together. If there be no cross there will be no crown. The martyr spirit is the spirit of our faith. "The central principle of our religion is self-sacrifice ; and its perpetual symbol is a cross."

5. Again, *if we would avail ourselves of the benefits of the Redeemer's passion by an appropriating faith, there must be upon our part a sincere, conscientious, and thorough putting away of sin.* He does not save His people *in* but *from* their sins ; and an essential part of that repentance which may be regarded as the very first step in a religious life consists in the renunciation of sin. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." Without this no man has a right to expect mercy at the hand of God. It is true, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God ;" but this grace is not given to any who are not made willing to part with their sins. Every truly penitent person

has placed himself in antagonism to sin, and has, so far as his present feelings and intentions are concerned, entered upon a life-long struggle against it in all its forms. Upon this point we cannot be too jealous of ourselves. No quarter must be given to sin. It must neither be allowed in our heart, nor in our lives. A relentless war must be waged against it whatever may be the shape it assumes ; and no sacrifice on our part must be considered too great in order to get rid of it. If the right eye cause us to offend we must pluck it out, if the right hand be the offending member it must be cut off. However pleasant or profitable a habit may be, even though it should be pleasing to us as the light of the eye, or profitable as the "cunning" of the right hand, if it is offensive to God and repugnant to the teaching of His word, it must be promptly and unconditionally abandoned. "Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." Old principles and old practices, old feelings and old associations, all that belongs to the old sinful state must be resolutely put away. Jews were scrupulously exact in putting leaven away from their dwellings at the time of the passover ; and the reason of their exactness was founded upon the fact that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The smallest particle of leaven rendered the bread unfit for the paschal feast ; and, owing to its diffusive quality a little leaven soon imparted its properties to a great mass. In both these respects leaven may be regarded as a type of sin.

The smallest degree of sinfulness willingly harboured in the heart renders it unfit for the reception of Christ, and taints and corrupts the whole life. God hates sin ; there is in His nature an implacable antipathy to it ; His

holiness, which is His very life, the essential perfection of His character, and the glory of His being, makes it impossible that He should ever regard it otherwise than with abhorrence. He sent His Son into the world to save us from our sins ; His blood was shed upon the cross that we might be cleansed from all sin ; and He is ready to not only destroy the power and abolish the reign of sin, but also to extirpate the very principle of it from our hearts ; but He certainly will not spare us if we form an alliance with it. We must therefore make up our minds either to one side or the other of the alternative, to either part with sin or part with the Saviour. We have to choose between sin and damnation, on one hand, and Christ and salvation, on the other. It is true the argument in the chapter from which the text is taken was originally directed against that laxity of discipline by which notorious transgressors, whose scandalous lives were a disgrace to the Christian name, were allowed to remain in the Corinthian Church, but it applies with equal force to that looseness of personal discipline by which sin is harboured in our individual hearts and lives ; it is no less applicable to the Church distributively than to the Church collectively considered ; for if holiness is to be the distinctive peculiarity of the body, it must be the distinguishing characteristic of the members. "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

6. Another general observation suggested by this subject, and the last I shall mention, is, *If we would receive*

Christ in such a way as to avail ourselves of His saving benefits, we must receive Him in the spirit of prompt and unquestioning obedience. We must hold ourselves in readiness to do or to dare whatever may be enjoined upon us by our divine Master, the Captain of our salvation. If we have taken Christ's yoke it is that we may work in it; if we have taken His burden it is that we may bear it; if we have taken His cross it is not only that we may carry it, but, if needs be, that we may be lifted up upon it. The manner in which the Israelites were commanded to eat the passover is eminently suggestive. It was a pilgrim's meal. It could scarcely fail to remind them that that was not their rest. They did not even sit down to it. They stood with their loins girt, as if ready for immediate action; and with their shoes on, and their staves in their hands, as if they were ready for the march. Brethren, we are strangers and pilgrims, as all our fathers were. This is not our rest. Here we are called to work and to war, to do or to die, as the Lord may appoint. "None of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself; but whether we live we live unto the Lord, or whether we die we die unto the Lord: whether living or dying we are the Lord's." The hurried manner in which the paschal lamb was commanded to be eaten was not without its significance. It seems to point to the avidity with which we should embrace Christ, and to the promptness and eagerness with which we should seek to possess ourselves of all the provisions of His grace, that being strengthened with might by His Spirit, we might be thoroughly furnished and ready for whatever His wisdom may see fit to appoint. The Hebrews ate the passover as if there was not a moment to be lost. Brethren, so should we receive Christ. There

was a journey before them, and they did not know the moment that they would be called to take up the march. There is a great journey before us ; we must go the way of all the earth ; and we know not the moment when our marching orders will arrive. But even before this, probably, for most of us there is work to be done. The fields are white unto the harvest, and the call for labourers comes from every quarter. And the great qualification, for working as well as living, is to have our souls filled with the spirit of our Master.

Brethren, behold the Lamb of God !





BATTLE FOR THE GOSPEL FAITH, THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH.

SERMON X.

BY REV. J. GRAHAM, GODERICH.

“Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel ; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries. PHIL. i. 27, 28.



THE Bible enlarges the range of human knowledge. Without it we could have known nothing of the existence or condition of other intellectual beings besides the human. It informs us that God created angelic spirits. Like all Divine creations, they were good, peaceful, and happy. These morning stars of creation once sang together ; these sons of God shouted for joy. But it did not continue. Sin and strife arose among them. Some of them kept not their first estate, and are now reserved under chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. But though strife commenced among those higher intelligences, it did not stop there. We have to gaze upon sin in another sphere.

The Bible opens with two of the most important facts ever communicated to the human mind—God and His creation. These were not discovered, but revealed. At the conclusion of the first chapter of Genesis we have God surveying His work, and leaving, not only on man, but on “everything that He had made,” the impress of “very good.” Eden was man’s home. It was a scene where peace reigned, and plenty smiled. But how soon changed? The originator of strife in another sphere now plies his infernal arts here. Man sinned, peace fled, and strife arose; the conflict still proceeds—the end is not yet. The statement of the fall may be doubted, but the facts of human history correspond with it, and the spheres of animate and inanimate nature seem adapted to it. Earth has been, and still is, a scene of strife. The animal sphere and inorganic elements seem calculated to remind us of the conditions of our earthly probation. There is storm and calm, sunshine and cloud, the sweet zephyr and the blighting sirocco. There is a struggle for life among the animal tribes. They must devour one another. We cannot take a mouthful of food, or draw a breath, without producing death. I do not assert that Adam’s sin produced this state of things, either by natural consequence or judicial penalty; but it does not seem as if this world was fitted to be a home for an innocent race, though it seems well fitted for the training of such probationary beings as we are, for a future peaceful world, where

“We shall lay our armour by,
And dwell with Christ at home.”

When we move from the animal into the mental sphere, there we find strife fiercest. Look at man politically.

Has peace reigned there? No. In all ages nearly, nations are baptized in blood. And in the most Christian and civilized nations of the globe to-day, the national revenue is liberally voted, and universal genius taxed, in order to provide and construct the most destructive weapons of war. What a scene of strife is presented in the history of mental speculation! From Thales to Hegel, the course of philosophy presents theory in conflict with theory. Now over the dizzy heights of Idealism, now down in the Serbonian bog of Sensationalism. And to-day, philosophy may be fitly represented by the "Revelations of Chaos." It is so in the sphere of religion. If you want to see the arch-demon of strife and his imps holding carnival, glance at the attendants around those martyr fires which persecutors have kindled; look out on the continual succession of bloody wars waged in behalf of religion. In all ages you have priest against priest, and God against God, marshalled in battle's fierce array. Considering the natural phenomena of the world, and the facts of human history, we cannot wonder much at the old Greek, who, in his speculations on the nature and origin of things, arrived at the conclusion that strife was "the father of all things—gods and men." Now considering the state of human society when Christianity was ushered into the world, and considering its mission in the world, is it not reasonable to suppose that it would be the *occasion*, though not the *cause*, of additional strife? True it is, that the end contemplated in the gospel is "peace on earth, good will towards men." But equally true it is, that in working to that end it will be, as it has been, the occasion of strife in the world. Its author says: "I came not to send.

peace on earth, but a sword." Paul understood the matter so ; hence his frequent use of military metaphors to present the duties of Christian life. Though enlisted under the banner of the King of Salem, the hero heart of the soldier beat within his bosom. The inspired truth takes the battle-form in his heroic soul. He met Nero's grim executioner with the exclamation on his sacred lips—"I have fought a good fight * * * I have kept the faith." In writing to the church at Philippi—where he had formerly suffered imprisonment—he uses the words of the text—"stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel ; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries." In these words he presents the object of Christian strife, and the method necessary to success. First, let us notice—

I. THE OBJECT OF THE STRIFE.

This is "the faith of the Gospel." This implies all the blessings of the Gospel salvation, for all the promises are yea and Amen in Christ Jesus to him that believeth. To this Gospel there were adversaries in Paul's day, and in every day since ; and as Christianity enjoins on its professors the duty of preserving its doctrinal purity against those who would corrupt it, and of propagating it against those who would oppose it—hence the strife. Judging from one stand-point we might be led to conclude that the Gospel would never have an adversary. When we think that it is light for the world's darkness, life for its death, and peace for its strife ; we may wonder at its adversaries. But facts show that it has¹ been, and still is, opposed. The adversaries to-day are [numerous,² and somewhat peculiar. Clothed in all liveries they come from all quarters. Decked out with scholastic honours,

wearing the coronet of nobility, endorsed by scientific associations, and haranguing the promiscuous crowd—they come forth, “speaking great swelling words of vanity” against the Lord’s Anointed. Under every garb they resemble “those noxious insects which seem plumed for the annoyance of our atmosphere, dangerous alike in their torpidity and animation, infesting where they fly and poisoning where they repose.” “Soldiers,” said a French king upon the battle-field, “you are Frenchmen, I am your king, there are the enemy—let us march.” So Christ says to all Christians—you are citizens of my kingdom, I am your king, there are your adversaries—

“ To battle all proceed,
Armed with the unconquerable mind,
Which was in Christ your Head.”

The battle forces of to-day are more closely arrayed around the *Person* of Jesus than ever before, and therefore, to this point attention is directed. This is at once the source and citadel of Christianity.

In striving for the faith once delivered to the saints, Christ should be enthroned as the supreme authority in the whole sphere of Revelation.

He enjoined the search of the Old Testament Scriptures, and declared that they testified of *Him*. After His resurrection, when expounding those scriptures to His disciples, on the way to Emmaus, we are told that “beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning *Himself*.” He tells them that “all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning *me*.” The Apostles witness to

Christ as the Revealer to the Prophets. Peter witnesses that it was the Spirit of Christ which was *in* them that enabled them to “testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” John tells us that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Paul tell us that he did not receive his Gospel from men, but “by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Thus Christ’s authority is stamped upon old and new—it is *one* Revelation. Jesus, Moses, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Apostles, must stand or fall together. All must stand, for Christ is the source and centre of all. Thus we must regard the whole sphere of Revelation as “it is in Jesus.” The adversaries who impeach Moses to-day, must, by consequence, impeach Christ to-morrow—witness the case of Colenso. The Christian Church is called to be a witness for Jesus, not by witnessing to *new* revelations given, but by preserving the one already given, and by earnest effort, in the spirit of Christ, to bring the whole world to the obedience of faith. Like the light of the sun on the solar system, Christ spreads His endorsation over all revelation—let the Church witness to it.

In striving for the faith we must maintain absolute Deity, united with perfect humanity, in the person of Christ.

Formerly some of the adversaries coarsely blasphemed His Divinity; now their successors would carry it off “with a whiff of the Otto of Roses.” Formerly some dissolved His humanity by their speculations; now, others give us altogether a “Divine humanity.” Both are false witnesses. Deny either Divinity or humanity, and how do you stand with Isaiah when he testifies of Him as “a child born, a Son given;” and also, as “the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace?”

How do you stand with St. John when he says "the Word was God," and also, that "the Word was made flesh?" We are told by John that Jesus was *full* of truth; but if He was not Divine, idolatry is righteous, or Jesus *full* of falsehood, when He says that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." The glorified saints and angels who worship in the light of the upper sanctuary, are all represented as "saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Are all these idolators? It is the Deity of Christ that gives authority to His teaching, efficacy to His atonement, and almightiness to His intercession. Without it the Bible is a cheat, our faith a blind superstition, our hope a deceitful mirage, and our churches nothing but shrines of idolatry. But all is well. Listen to the song of saints around the throne, catch the inspired strain of prophetic rapture, search the narratives of evangelists, consult the epistles of Apostles, gaze on the visions of the Apocalypse; and though you find them like the wheels of prophetic vision, full of eyes, darting their glances in all directions, yet, when all those eyes rest on Jesus, they agree in one confession of faith—"Lo! this our God we have waited for Him." To admit the scriptures to be a Divine revelation, and yet deny the Deity of Christ, exhibits a mournful picture of stupid absurdity, married to reckless presumption. Paul's faith rested on a Christ in whom was God reconciling the world unto Himself; and because of this, he wrought in its behalf with a zeal that never cooled, a courage that never quailed, borne upon a wing [that never tired. Under any other faith the soul seems shrouded in gloom

when it closes with the King of Terrors ; but this disarms the tyrant of his power. God and man in Christ, bridging over the awful gulf that separated sinful man from a holy God, when realized by a living faith, wings the soul into the highest latitude of thought, and keeps it there spell-bound for ever. It enlarges the heart to the dimensions of the race, and fits either for the most heroic deeds, or the most intense suffering.

“ Guard this faith with holy care,
Mystic virtues slumber there :
’Tis the lamp within the soul,
Holding genii in control :
Faith shall walk the stormy water ;
In the unequal strife prevail ;
Nor when comes the dread avatar,
From its fiery splendours quail.
Faith shall triumph o’er the grave,
Love shall bless the life it gave.”

In striving for the faith of the Gospel, the integrity of Christ’s mediatorship must be maintained.

First, as to its *unity*. Is there *one* mediator, or many ? or are there *sub*-mediators ? Paul received his Gospel from Jesus Christ, and he says : “ There is *one* God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” With Paul, the unity of God and the unity of Christ’s mediatorship measure each other. A system, then, that supersedes the only true mediator, by setting up others, either as equals or inferiors, in mediation with God, bears on its front the mark of Antichrist. Neither saints nor angels, living or dead, Pope or priest, is permitted to intrude here. The priesthood established by God previous to the coming of the Great High Priest of

our profession, fitly foreshadowed His coming ; but in Christianity there can be no priesthood. The Romish system, which sets up a priest-privileged, close-corporation, with special powers to absolve from sin, and regenerate the soul through their sacramental administration, is not Christian. It is a ghastly parody on a Gospel ministry, a pagan substitute for a departed Saviour, and a libel on " the Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth." All sacerdotalism is spiritual quackery ; and like all other quackery its medicine is more to be dreaded than the disease. Christianity repudiates the monster who erects the throne of his idol over the head of a superseded Christ, and who claims the right to feed, even with a brother's blood, the cannibal appetite of his priestly maw. Charity for its deluded victims, but no truce with sacerdotalism anywhere. Against its motley host of shams I present to you the *one* mediator, Christ Jesus. But it will be said, perhaps, by some, " we entirely reject all mediators but the one Christ Jesus." All well so far ; but permit me to ask, have you been reconciled to God through the mediation of Christ ? Have you ever sought reconciliation through Jesus ? What will it avail to have protested against the *sham* if you have not embraced the *real* ? Religion is not a *mere* negation of the false, it is the possession of the true. Jesus says : " no man cometh to the Father but by me." You believe these words. But if you have not been reconciled to the Father through the Son, you do not know what Jesus means when he says : " My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you." This is the present blessing of Christ's Gospel. Let the soul feel this, and then all false mediators will vanish like the old hags of darkness before the splen-

dour of the Sun of Righteousness. The world will have mediators, true or false. We can only banish and keep out the false by the possession of the true. What the world needs to subdue its proud rationalism, to remove its gloomy superstition, and to bind up the devil with angelic hands, is "*peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Is there a soul here unhappy, and longing for peace? Now fix the eye of faith on your mediator, and see

"Above your black, despairing thoughts,
Above your fears, above your faults,
His powerful intercessions rise ;
And guilt recedes, and terror dies."

Another view, which interferes with the Gospel view of Christ's mediation, is that which *denies the expiatory character of the atonement*.

This is not like priestly superstition, an error on the side of addition, but on the side of subtraction. Many now deny that Christ's *death* had any reference to the satisfaction of Divine justice. It was a noble moral act, designed to show us that there is "no way of overcoming evil but by suffering from it," or "He bore our sins upon His sympathetic feeling," or "He bore our sins by confessing them to God on our behalf." This view regards the efficacy of Christ's death to consist in God being pleased to see the self-sacrifice of Christ for us, and that it is a glorious moral power over us by stimulating example ; but it totally denies that Christ's death had any relation to the satisfaction of Divine justice, in the forgiveness of sin. In denying this, it destroys the scriptural doctrine of Christ's mediation. Christ cannot mediate between an offended God and offending man, if He has not satis-

fied Divine justice. Paul's Gospel affirms what the self-sacrifice theory denies. Directing both Jew and Gentile to what God *meant* in the death of Christ, he thus speaks : "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God ; to declare I say at this time His righteousness ; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The man who denies that these words teach that Christ's death had any reference to the satisfaction of Divine justice, in the forgiveness of sin, could not be convinced of the erroneousness of any opinion which he may entertain, by scriptural passages. This theory of atonement by vicarious feeling and example is called by its abettors the "moral view." Would it not be more correctly named by the *immoral* view ? It is scarcely moral, in the Christian sense, to theorize, not only without, but against, Biblical statements, on such a subject as atonement. And most certainly the so-called moral view affords no satisfaction, not only to the Divine sense of justice, but to man's moral sense of justice. The moral view is sometimes called "broad," in comparison with what its abettors call the "orthodox view." Whether they understand the orthodox view or not, is not now inquired, but were it not for their own narrow vision, they would see that the Biblical view is much broader than theirs. It gives all the power of Christ's example of self-sacrifice that the moral view does, while it gives to the embrace of our faith the expiating Saviour, by whom "we have now received the atonement." True, we are exhorted to be modest on this subject, as "we only know atonement as a fact, not as a theory." It is sufficient to reply

that the expiatory view of Christ's death is the *fact* of Scripture. The moral view denies it, and therefore takes its stand in the ranks of irrational Rationalism. As for the exhortation to *modesty*, it should be always welcome, but it is much to be regretted that in this case it has not been more correctly applied at home before being sent abroad. It would have saved many theologasters from presenting to the Christian world the narrowest theory ever conceived on the subject, and would have saved many more from the *immodesty* of contradicting or ignoring the *fact* of Scripture by their theory. The Methodist pulpit all over the world pronounces the moral view—to say the least—fatally defective. The notes of its songs which encircle the world are—

“ Honour for ever to the Lamb
Who bore our sin, and curse, and pain :
Let angels bless His sacred name,
And every creature say, Amen ! ”

If we are to stand fast in the faith of the Gospel, the universal availableness of Christ's mediatorship must be maintained against the theory of limitation. Whatever theory limits the atonement, destroys the availableness of mediation, outside of that limit. Christ says—“ No man cometh to the Father but by Me ; ” and Christ can be no mediator for any man, for whom He made no atonement. To limit atonement is to limit mediation. The limitation is not in the Gospel revealed by Jesus Christ to St. Paul. Writing to Timothy he says : “ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour ; who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one, and only one, mediator

between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle ; (I speak the truth and lie not ;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." Here it is unmistakably declared that the ground work of the apostle's preaching was *one* mediator who gave Himself a "ransom for all." Paul would never have been guilty of the stupid absurdity of offering salvation to *all* if he believed that atonement was only made for *some* ; nor would that Christ who is *full* of truth ever have sent him as *His* ambassador on an embassy so *full* of falsehood. Against those who would supplement, we maintain the unity ; against those who would dissolve, we maintain the reality ; against those who would limit, we maintain the universality of Christ's mediatorship. All theories that interfere with an incarnate Saviour, an expiatory satisfaction, and a universally available mediator, are only things of an hour—hastening away. With an eye on them, and on the Christ of the Gospel, we may truly say :

" Such little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

These little systems form no part of the Gospel preached from the Methodist pulpit. The Methodist missionary has belted the world with a Gospel that offers salvation to all, because provided for all. He presents no *sub*-mediators, he preaches no mutilated Christ. He has only to look back and around him to behold its God-attested glories. It has lifted alike the embruted masses of its

native Isle, and the cannibals of Southern Seas from degradation, and consecrated the loftiest intellects to its service. It has made the religious world move. We are now going to have a monument to John Wesley erected in Westminster Abbey. It is now conceded that none of England's great sons better deserves it. I have no objection to this. With more credit it might have been erected sooner. But I incline to the opinion that if Wesley was consulted to-day on the matter, his advice would be—"Leave off to erect that statue. It is not the kind of monument most proper for me. Spend the money in spreading the Gospel which I preached. Let me see such trophies through the labours of my successors as that high caste Brahmin from Ganges' sacred stream, and that eloquent Romish Friar from under the gloomy shadow of the Vatican, who each witnessed to the power of the Gospel faith, at the late Conference in Newcastle—these are my only appropriate monument." As the stars are Newton's best monument, so holy souls, by the preaching of the Methodist pulpit, are Wesley's best monument among men. He shall not want them. His Gospel is Paul's and it is marching on, not only to a statue in Great Britain's "Temple of Silence," but to the Throne of the World. Let us catch the spirit of his theme ; and then, whatever may be the sum of silly prattle which we may hear from the modern tomb-builders around the statue about apostolic *succession*, we shall have apostolic *success*, and thus secure the final *object* of the Christian warfare.

Let us pass on to notice—

II. THE METHOD NECESSARY TO SUCCESS IN THE STRIFE.

Method is a matter of importance in the attainment

of any end conditioned on human agency. Foolish methods may hinder the attainment of a good end, and wicked means may damage our own character while they hinder righteous ends. The end cannot sanctify the means. In the matter of striving for the faith of the Gospel both principles and method are subjects of revelation. Let us look at a few features in the apostolic command here given : " Stand fast in *one* spirit, with *one* mind, striving together, * * * * and in nothing terrified by your adversaries." Only two points in this exhortation are now noticed—the necessity of an *united* front, and a *courageous spirit* against the common foe. It is in an associated capacity that man exerts his mightiest power, either to blight or beautify. The Church is a divinely constituted and directed association for the overthrow of sin, and the establishment of holiness in the world. It must not break up the condition of its success—*unity*. But what kind of unity is it ? First, it is unity in the spirit and purpose of Christ ; not uniformity of opinion on ecclesiastical polity, or mode of worship, or even what some might deem Christian dogma. Uniformity of opinion is neither possible nor desirable, except upon the essentials of the Gospel faith. These every one who has the *spirit* of holiness must have. Paul and Barnabas were not of one opinion on every matter, even connected with Christian labour. The apostles sanctioned difference of opinion in the Apostolic churches. But there was a unity of truth, life, and purpose among them, nevertheless. There is a great variety in the vegetable and animal world, with a unity in vegetable and animal *life*. So it may be in the Christian world. With a vast variety in other matters, there may be a unity of *spiritual life* in Christ Jesus. This is the

true ground of union. Those who have attempted to force all Christians into uniformity of opinion, or mode of worship, or form of government, either by civil penalties, or a dogmatic *un-churching* of all who will not conform to their view, have been the most pernicious schismatics of the church. And only that the force of true spiritual life baffled all their efforts in the past, we should have had to-day the uniformity of the arid desert, not of the fruit-laden valley—of the stagnant cess-pool, not of the heaving ocean—of the cemetery, not of the family. The only union of any value, or any power for spiritual good, is that of spiritual life, which dwells in the heart of every true Christian, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Wherever this exists it is a bond of union, and the mightiest impulse to Christian effort. Where there is unity of life *in* Christ, there will be unity of purpose *with* Christ. Without spiritual life, and by consequence of its absence, there may be effort to bring the world to the unity of the Roman, Greek, Anglican, or other unity; but there will not be united effort to bring the world to the unity of faith and life in Christ Jesus. Those who have true unity of spiritual life, ought to unite in maintaining the essential integrity, divine authority, and universal triumph of the Christian faith, notwithstanding their variety of opinion in matters which each denomination may deem important enough to justify separate church organization. Ought not these common principles, and aims, lead to unity in the repudiation of weapons not sanctioned by Christ in the Christian warfare? Has not evangelical Protestantism hindered the triumph of spiritual religion in the world by its employment of weapons repudiated by Christ, and thus *limited* the Holy Spirit's influence? How stupid and weak too, the

position that the religion of light and love needs to be buttressed by civil penalties in order to its protection ; and supported by taxes gathered at the point of the bayonet, in order that the clergy may be respectably maintained ! O ye of little faith ! look at the noblest triumphs of Christian truth over pagan error, and it had none of these supposed necessities. We talk a good deal, on the hindrance of infidel speculations ; but the political union of Church and State has done more injury to the cause of the Christian religion than all the ravings of infidelity since the crucifixion. An eloquent political orator—Phillips—has said : “ I hold it a criminal and accursed sacrilege to rob even a beggar of a single motive for his devotion ; and I hold it an equal insult to my own faith to offer me any boon for its profession.

* * * * The union of Church and State only converts good Christians into bad statesmen, and political knaves into pretended Christians. It is, at best, but a foul and adulterous connection, polluting the purity of heaven with the abomination of earth, and hanging the tatters of a *political piety* upon the cross of an insulted Saviour.” Will it be said that these are the rash words of the political agitator ? Then we commend to the thought of all, and especially the Methodists—the words of a wise and good minister of Jesus Christ—Wesley. Mark ! he is preaching on the “ Mystery of Iniquity.” “ Persecution never did, never could, give any lasting wound to Christianity. But the greatest it ever received, the grand blow which was struck at the root of that humble, gentle, patient love, which is the fulfilling of the Christian law ; the whole essence of true religion was struck in the fourth century when Constantine the Great called himself a Christian.

* * * * Then the "mystery of iniquity" was no more hid, but stalked abroad in the face of the sun. Then one might truly say,

"At once in that unhappy age, broke in
All wickedness and every deadly sin :
Truth, modesty, and love, fled far away,
And force, and thirst of gold, claimed universal sway."

And this is the event which most Christian expositors mention with such triumph ! Yea, which some have supposed to be typified in the Revelation, by "the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven !" Rather say it was the coming of Satan and all his legions from the bottomless pit ; seeing from that very time he hath set up his throne over the face of the whole earth, and reigned over the Christian, as well as the pagan world, with hardly any control." It is time that all Christians demanded the overthrow of those systems of statutable religion and national bribery, which have so much hindered the progress of true religion. The Holy Spirit cannot give triumph to these weapons. They secure defeat instead of victory. The only hope of the Christian world is in *free* evangelical churches, united in *one* spirit to their Head, and *united* in the use of Christ's method.

Again, do not our useless divisions hinder the triumphs of the cross by limiting the full power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with our efforts ? Metaphysical speculations sometimes limit God in the domain of physical nature. He may be permitted to create worlds, and establish laws ; but after that He is only permitted to stand by, and see how the laws go. God is limited by others in the range of redeeming mercy to the narrow belt of the elect

number ; and by others He is limited in His saving power to the special channels of their sacramental administration. But no limitation is so pernicious in result as the *moral* limitation of the Holy Spirit's influence by our sectarian strife. The Jewish people are charged by the psalmist with insulting God by their sins in the wilderness, and thus "limited the Holy One of Israel." Similar it may be with divided, and sometimes sectarian Protestantism. As a mutinous army limits the power of the most competent Captain to lead it to victory, so sectarian strife limits the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with our efforts. There is a necessity for union. Herod and Pilate are made friends on the same day that Christ was to be opposed. So it is now. Colenso and Bradlaugh, Pio Nono and Boston infidels unite against the authority of the Bible. Let the true Church unite. Separate units, nor even flying squads, will not accomplish the purpose. One grain of gunpowder contains the same explosive elements as millions. The spark that lights the one grain would light the millions, if close together. Set them off in separate grains and very little will be effected. But bring them all together in the cannon, or well-laid train, and the ball carries destruction into the enemy's camp, or the ground is blown from under his feet. Similar would be the effect of united effort by all Christians in behalf of the faith once delivered to the saints, among the hosts of sin. It would blast the usurped ground from under the feet of the *man of sin*, when he would fain distract attention from his own blasphemous unity to our endless sects ; it would scatter the innumerable hosts of small cynics, and pseudo philanthropists, who charge the church with a want of sympathy with the suffering and oppressed ; for then,

Christianity would appear in embodied form as the most beneficent power in the world—"a thing of beauty and a joy forever." The solid, but motley hosts of the foe, the errors of the past, the hopes of the future, the prayer of Jesus, and the wail of a dying world—all unite to enforce the exhortation of the text—"Stand fast in *one* mind, with *one* spirit striving *together* for the faith of the Gospel." When the ancient Romans were hard pressed by the events of war, they fled to the temples of their gods for armour and weapons of war. Let Christians only go to the armory of Christ for these, and victory waits to crown them. Hope for the world's speedy conquest to Jesus will brighten, when the army of Christ is united in the spirit, weapons and aim of Jesus ; and bearing down on the *man of sin*, not in contentious factions, but in united regiments. United we conquer, divided we fall. Let us hear the notes of the true war-song :

"In God's own might
We gird us for the coming fight ;
And strong in Him whose cause is ours,
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons He hath given—
The light, and truth, and love of heaven."

Finally, we are exhorted in the text to strive for the faith of the Gospel *courageously*. "In nothing terrified by your adversaries." Neither in the first, nor in any age since, have we any cause for terror ; but much to inspire courage. Three kinds of force have been tried for the overthrow of Christianity—it must be crushed by the sword, refuted by reason, or killed by the introduction of foreign poison. We take courage when we know that all

failed. In pagan Rome it came in contact with a political power which then reigned as the proud dictator of the world. Collected in its Pantheon at Rome were perched in stately grandeur the gods of its established religion. Before these gods the Christian refused to bow. Persecution—the natural weapon of falsehood—soon began its brutal work ; Christian blood flowed abundantly ; and in reading the bloody pages of what has been called the first ten persecutions, as the reader approaches the close, he feels inclining to the opinion that there cannot be a further supply of victims, though the pagan altar, like the horse-leech, still cries—give. Succeeding this brute force others are employed. The Rationalistic forces are hired. Christianity must be refuted. Accordingly, the satirist, the philosopher, the priest of literature, appear on the battle field, all marshalled in array, and panting for the blood. Brute force attacked Christianity from the first, but it was not until the middle of the second century that it became the subject of literary investigation. When the pagan literary forces came forth against it, it was to justify the brute persecutions, to satirize the proscribed Christian, and to supercede it by an eclectic theosophy. The result of the conflict presents a series of facts, which, combined with the means employed, inspires the Christian with courage. On the Christian side there is no weapon employed but the preaching of its own peaceable principles, and fidelity to its supreme authority. On the pagan side there are employed the bloody sword of the most powerful political state in the world, the bigotry and superstition of the pagan masses, the learning of the philosopher, and the altar of the priest—all in favor of a system embodied in the political state, and consecrated by ages. Well,

what is the result? The curling sneer is flattened on the lip of the scorner, the sword falls in pieces, the philosopher is refuted, the oracles are confounded, the temples are deserted, the Pantheon is depopulated, the Christians multiply, Christianity ascends the throne, and

“ Apollo from his shrine
Has ceased for ever to divine.”

Looking at this, has the Christian any reason to be terrified at the adversaries of the Christian faith? Nor need we be terrified at the result in succeeding ages. True, the beauty of Christianity was marred, and her life endangered, by the introduction of foreign poison. Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, and Maimonides would be surprised, if permitted to take a peep at the manner in which they shaped the church, from their mouldering urns. But Christianity showed that, when seen in her beauty, she had attraction sufficient to make her children shake off the medieval vampire that had fastened his envenomed fangs upon her vitals. The *Reformation* springs forth, and, like the Phoenix from her ashes, with invigorated body and newly plumed wing, she goes forth on a bolder flight than ever. Since then, the Christian has no reason for terror, though there is much to suggest certain lines of action. The English Deists were driven completely from the field in Britain. Their sophisms received their *quietus* by Butler, and their power for evil among the masses was counterworked by the revival under Wesley and his coadjutors. The national atheism of revolutionary France, under the strumpet called the *Goddess of Reason*, did not long survive. “ The Almighty’s vengeance blazed against the wall of her temple, the diadem fell from the brow of

the idolater, and the blood of her victims extinguished the flame of the altar." English Deism contributed to *German Rationalism*, which has marred the work of the Reformation in its native home. But notwithstanding its great swelling words of vanity, it is now on the wane, even in Germany itself. A large number of godly evangelists are leading the masses back to the simple, but invincible, faith of the Gospel. Perhaps it may be useful to Christians in Canada to know that this has largely to be done in spite of those *State Universities* of which we hear so much, which are not misrepresented by being called brooding-haunts of infidelity. But after all, while Rome is crumbling, the Bible is spreading, freedom moves, and Rationalism is bearded in its own den ; we have no reason to be "terrified at our adversaries," either in the field of Ritualism or Rationalism. But, hark ! Another bugle-note is sounded, other weapons are forged, and other forces are marshalled. *Positivism* now takes the field. We are told that heretofore we have had nothing solid to contend against, for "philosophy is impossible," but Positivism "verifies every step," and this upsets the superstition of the supernatural. We have no time to dissect this *brute*, but claim a little space to exhibit him. He has had other forefathers, but we look at him in the naked deformity of his French father, and his English offspring. It is characteristic of Christianity that the wisdom of her author is justified by her children ; and it already appears that the stupidity of Positivism is patent, by the folly of its Father—Compte exhibits it in himself. After his "Course of Positive Philosophy," he founds a religion, draws up a "Positive Calendar" of worship, and the gods are again presented. But who or what are they ? Well,

just this—in his philosophy the “being of God is an unnecessary hypothesis,” but in his religion we are to worship “collective humanity under the idea of a woman.” The Pantheon is again replenished, and in it there figure Moses, and Paul, side by side with Confucius, Mahomet, and Voltaire. This is thy religion and these be the gods who are to go before thee, O Positivism! Where do they lead? Back to the old idolatry, and down to the old pagan degradation. They will soon smother in their native slime. But it must be noted here that the English offspring are ashamed of their sire, and wish us to spread the mantle of pity over such a specimen of brain-atrophy, as Compté’s religion. Be it so. But then, what do they give us instead of the Christianity they ignore? As the mightiest evolution we have, as a “first principle,” the “Great Absolute Unknown.” We know nothing about Him—or rather *it*—we can ask nothing from Him. This last of the gods by Spencer has been justly characterized as “an Almighty dead head yclept the Absolute. An unintelligent absolute is an infinite fool, and fools be they who admit its supremacy.” Have Christians with their hand in the hand of the Heavenly Father any reason to be terrified at this *mumbo jumbo* for a god. Let us leave this infinite fool in the embraces of his foolish children while we look at the *man* presented to us. What is he? Well, we have for his origin “force,” “protoplasm,” and an “Ascidian,” grub, which, in the course of evolution, developed into an African hairy monkey, and then into a man. For a *soul* we have a “brain that secretes thought as the liver secretes bile.” Conscience is nothing but “associations of sensations,” and benevolence a “secretion of sugar.” This has been called the “dirt

philosophy." It may be a dirty philosophy, but it is not the philosophy of dirt. It might do for the hogs of the Epicurean stye, but while there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding, he will loathe this material *brute* of evolution. We are not terrified at this "adversary." Though the forces marshalled in its defence may appear possessed of the *dash* of its French father, and though formed in the solid squares of his *un*-English offspring, yet the iron and clay of which the brute Colossus which they defend is composed, will be broken into pieces by the strokes of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands. It may hinder its superstitious devotees from attaining the glorious immortality which the Gospel faith offers even to them; but it will never supersede it in the world. The Sun of Righteousness will continue to illumine the pathway to glory long after oblivion has spread her sable veil over the noisy howls of those boastful "adversaries." The history of the past, and the movements of the present, justify the conclusion that, at the very least, the foes of Christianity will never be able to overcome it. But it is still asked, do they justify the conclusion that Christianity will ultimately triumph over every foe? We do not say they do, though they certainly point in that direction. To warrant its final triumph we catch the inspiration of the Master's promise, and of the Leader's voice—"all power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth, go ye therefore and preach the Gospel to every creature, and Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." These words warrant the conclusion of universal triumph. Sufficient wisdom to plan, power to execute, and will to use these for the purpose, must succeed. All these are to our

Leader given, and that without measure. Tindal may tell us that "the tap-root of all science is force," but we reply, we care not, for the tap-root of the Christian religion is the Creator and controller of all forces, and He is made "Head over all things to the church." He has led, and is still leading her forth, conquering and to conquer. Let us catch the inspiration of Paul in this text, and strive steadfastly, unitedly, and courageously for the faith of the Gospel, and—

"The world must sink beneath the hand
Which arms us for the war."

What—"Though the conflict be hot,
The field hath no strife
Where your Captain is not."

Act under His courage-inspiring eye. Act under the firm conviction that every prayer you offer, and every sacrifice you make, will burnish your own crown of rejoicing in the great day of Christ, and will assist in ushering in the day of the world's millennial glory, when—

"All crimes shall cease, and ancient frauds shall fail,
Returning justice lift aloft her scale;
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed innocence from heaven descend."





MANNA.

SERMON XI.

BY REV. C. FISH, PETERBOROUGH.

“And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, ‘It is manna:’ for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, ‘This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.’” EXODUS xvi. 14, 15.



HISTORY is a great teacher ; it makes known to us many of the follies and sins of our race, and furnishes forcible illustrations of the truth of that scripture, “The way of transgressors is hard.” It often appears as a beacon on the ocean of life, warning us to avoid the rocks against which others dashed, and the deceitful quicksands where thousands have perished. History places before us some of the moral excellencies of our race, and plainly shows us, in the example of others, the road to virtue and happiness, and solemnly impresses us with this fact, that real wealth, honor and happiness are to be found in God only. And yet again, you will observe, that in history

we have striking exhibitions of the attributes and perfections of Jehovah ; there is "God in history."

How forcible and sublime were the manifestations of these attributes and perfections in the history of God's ancient people, the Jews. In the stupendous miracles wrought out for their deliverance, what proofs of the Divine Omnipotence. "Marvellous works did He in the land of Ham." In the means employed for their guidance and protection what marks of infinite skill—"He led them by a pillar of cloud in the day-time, and by a pillar of fire by night." In sparing a murmuring, stiff-necked, and rebellious people so long, how impressive and cheering the proofs of Divine forbearance and tender mercy. "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, it is a people that do err in their heart and they have not known my ways." And in the rich and continuous bestowment of so many blessings, what evidences of undeserved and enlarged beneficence. "He sent them meat to the full." "He brought them forth also," says the Psalmist, "with silver and gold, and there was not one feeble person among them." He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up ; "so He led them through the depths as through the wilderness. And He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. The people asked, and he brought quails ; He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out ; they ran in the dry places like a river." And yet not wearied with blessings, as we learn from the text, He gave them bread from heaven, "And when," says Moses, "the dew that lay was gone up," etc.

I. CONSIDER THIS BREAD LITERALLY IN ITS SUITABIL-

ITY TO THE JEWS, AND TYPICALLY IN ITS APPLICATION TO CHRIST AS THE SOURCE OF UNIVERSAL BLESSING.

I *It was a needed supply.* To all human appearance those hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were in danger of perishing for want of food. They evidently both saw and felt the great want ; to them starvation appeared already in their midst, and in their unbelief in God, and utter despair, they cried, “ *Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt.*” In this their great extremity God sent them bread to eat which they knew not of.

The above is a faint picture of the utter destitution of our race in consequence of sin. Man’s spiritual ruin is variously represented by God the Holy Ghost. He is a *probationer*, “yet without strength,” all his moral powers having been paralyzed by transgression.

He is *debtor*, totally bankrupt ; “had nothing to pay ;” *dependent* on the bounty of another ; he has forfeited all claim to sympathy from his Benefactor, and is in a perishing condition.

He is a *traveller*, but has missed his way ; he is now an exile in a far-off land, and in seeking his way home again is in danger of being buried in the deserts.

He is a *subject of moral government* ; he has rebelled, he has been tried, found guilty, and condemned, and now awaits the execution of that sentence.

The children of Israel needed bread to save them from perishing ; much more did our utterly ruined world need a Saviour. For aught I know, a substitute might have been given to those Jews, but what could be given as a substitute for Christ ? Take Christ from the Old Testament and what have you left ? You have Patriarchs and

Prophets, Priests and Kings, but no Saviour. Take Him from the New Testament, and you have Apostles and Evangelists, but no Saviour. Take Christ from the church of to-day, and its light, life, beauty, and glory have all departed, and you have a valley full of dead men's bones, and very dry.

If the church be a garden, Christ is its beauty and fragrance ; He is " the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley."

If a house, Christ its foundation and chief corner stone.

If a family, Christ its elder brother, the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

If the church be composed of sinners saved by grace, then are we taught that all are saved " through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Man had fallen beyond the power of self-restoration—" And I looked," said Christ, " and there was none to help ; and I wondered that there was none to uphold : therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me." " For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me : In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." (Heb. x. 4—7.)

“ Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away our stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away ;

A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they."

2. *It seems a suitable supply.*

This was the food with which the Lord fed His people in the wilderness of Sin. Moses speaks of it as white, like hoar frost, round, and of the size of coriander seed. It fell every morning (except Sabbath) upon the dew, and when the dew was exhaled by the heat of the sun, the manna was found upon the rocks and upon the sand. How appropriate. Bread was the common want, and that Jehovah sent them. Had He opened for them a mine of silver, or of gold—nay, had He given them silver and gold as the dust, still they must have perished, as they could not purchase bread in the wilderness. God saw their need, and the blessing He sent them was just what was necessary to supply it.

How pre-eminently suited is the Lord Jesus Christ to meet all the wants of our ruined race. Are we in *darkness*? He is the light of the world. *In bondage*? He gives "liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." *Alienated*? He is the way to the Father, as well as "the Truth" and "the Life." Every prodigal may come home to God through Him. Are we *guilty*? He abundantly pardons. Are we *impure*? His blood cleanses from all sin. Are we dying? or already dead in trespasses and sins? Christ gives spiritual and eternal life—

"The Gospel, what a glorious plan,
How suited to our state,
The grace that raises fallen man
Is wonderful indeed."

We are told the Thracians had a striking emblem expressive of the mighty power of God. It was a sun, with three beams ; one shining on a sea of ice and melting it; a second shining on a rock and producing the same results, and a third, shining upon a dead body, and putting life into it. This emblem symbolizes the suitability of Christ's Gospel; it warms the coldest heart, melts the hardest, and raises those dead in trespasses and sins to a life in righteousness—

“ In vain our trembling conscience seeks
Some solid ground to rest upon ;
With long despair our spirit seeks
Till we apply to Thee alone.”

As the sound of this Gospel fell for the first time upon the ears of an ignorant Greenlander, named Kaiarnach, he stepped forward, and looking the missionary full in the face, said in an earnest and affecting tone, “ How was that? Tell me that once more, for I would fain be saved too.”

3. *It was a seasonable supply.* A thing may be good at any time, but much more so sometimes than other. God has not only given us good things, but He has given them when most needed. He gives us good things in season.

The promise of a Saviour was made to our great progenitor, when thick darkness was gathering around him, and he was about to be driven from Eden an outcast and a wanderer. The angel was sent to Lot in time to save him from the consuming flame which destroyed the city of Sodom. Abraham had already lifted the knife to slay his son, when a voice was heard from heaven saying,

“Lay not thine hand upon the lad.” Joseph was discovered to his sorrowing father in time to save the whole family from perishing by famine. Pharoah’s daughter was led to the river’s brink in time to save the future lawgiver of Israel from a watery grave. The serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, ere sinful Israel was utterly cut off. Elijah, on the eve of despair, had fled into the wilderness and was begging he might die, then the angel of the Lord appeared to comfort and strengthen him. When property, health, strength, friends, and all seemed gone, nothing left but simple trust, then Jehovah appeared as the help and defender of His servant Job. So in the case of those Jews in the wilderness : all other help was gone, then did the Lord come ; He came when His help was most needed and when no other being in the universe could help, and He came in time. At the battle of Waterloo, column after column had been precipitated for eight hours on the enemy posted along the ridge of the hill. The sun was rapidly sinking ; reinforcements for the defenders were in sight ; it appeared necessary to carry the position with one final charge or everything would be lost. A powerful corps had been summoned from across the country ; if it came in season all might yet be well. The great commander, confident in its arrival, formed his reserve into an attacking column and led them down the hill. Alas ! alas ! Grouchy failed to appear, but Blucher was there ; the Imperial General was beaten back, Waterloo lost, and Napoleon died an exile on the Island of St. Helena, because one of his Marshals was too late. Years ago a condemned man was led to execution, who had taken life under great provocation ; thousands had signed a petition for his reprieve

and it was fully expected. The last hour for the poor criminal had come, but no reprieve. And now the minutes fled swiftly, the people still looked and hoped ; the last moment gone, the fatal bolt was drawn, and a lifeless body hung suspended in mid-air. And now a horseman is in sight, his steed covered with foam ; in his right hand he held a packet which he waves to the crowd ; it was the express rider—he brought the reprieve, but, alas ! he was a little too late.

So said the physician when summoned to the bed of the dying : “A little too late, Madame.” The philanthropist reaches the scene of the calamity in time to learn that the sufferers are beyond his reach. The life-boat nears the wreck in time to see her sink with her helpless crew. Not so the Redeemer of our world. He not only came to seek and to save that which was lost, but He came in season ; He came in time to save the first sinner, and to save all his descendants. ’Tis true, that man had been tried, found guilty, and condemned. The sword had been drawn from its scabbard, but Jesus said, “Lo, I come *quickly*.” He was there to receive it, and as “He bared His bosom to the stroke,” He cried, “Deliver *him* from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.”

“With pitying eyes the Prince of Peace
Beheld our helpless grief ;
He saw, and O, amazing love !
He flew to our relief.”

4. *It was an abundant supply.*

Abundant supplies were needed for so great a multitude, supposed to be not less than three millions. Cut off from Egypt’s stores and surrounded by enemies, this was

their only source of supply ; yet it was found to be amply sufficient both for priest and people. It is thought that every man gathered as much as he could, and when brought into the encampment, it was measured by an omer, (about three quarts English measure,) if any had a surplus it was given to some other family that had not been able to collect a sufficiency, in consequence of the family being large, or the infirmity or sickness of some of its members, and the time of gathering being so brief, viz., before the heat of the day. St. Paul tells us, "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack. (2 Cor. viii. 15.) We find that the manna fell in such great quantities during the forty years of their journeyings as to feed the whole multitude. Moses says, "And the children of Israel did eat manna for forty years until they came to a land inhabited ; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan." (Exodus xvi. 35.) He satisfied them," says the Psalmist "with the bread of heaven." Now we are taught to regard this abundant supply of bread from heaven to meet the necessities of those perishing Jews, as a type of the rich provision made for all mankind in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Prophet Isaiah speaks of this provision as a feast spread upon a mountain, open to all. We are told in our Lord's parable of the great supper, that when they had brought in as many as they could find, it was said, "And yet there is room." He who by His own Son, proclaimed this Gospel, and by Him founded the Universal Church, has assured us that the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations, and the gates of the kingdom are open to all nations, tongues, kindreds, and people. It would seem as if in the church's divinely appointed and

perpetuated ministry, the glorious vision of the Apocalyptic seer was realized, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him ; for the hour of His judgment is come." (Rev. xiv. 6, 7.) And in the church's divinely instituted and perpetuated sacraments, the voice that saluted John in Patmos is still heard, saying, "*I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.* And the Spirit and the Bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. xxii. 16, 17.

"Its streams the whole creation reach,
So plenteous is the store ;
Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough for evermore."

5. *It was a miraculous supply.*

"As for the earth," said Job, "out of it cometh bread." (Job xxviii. 5.) Here, however, we find the order of nature reversed, and the bread came not out of the earth, but from heaven. It was not obtained by the sweat of the brow, by ploughing and sowing ; nor was it purchased with silver or gold ; it fell around their tents and they were permitted to gather as much as they needed. The Israelites never saw anything like it before ; its very name, we are told, signifies, "What is it?" and thus expresses their surprise at its appearance, "When the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, "What is it?" for they wist not what it was. Moses calls it in the text,

"The bread which the Lord hath given." It is called in lxxviii. Psalm and ver. 25 "Angel's food." It is evident from the testimony of Moses, that it was nothing common to the wilderness, and that the Israelites had never seen anything like it before. "He fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know." (Deut. viii. 3.) It is the opinion of divines, that nothing like the manna of the wilderness had ever been seen before, nor has anything like it appeared since miraculous supply in the wilderness ceased. It was truly bread from heaven, sent by the special interposition of God. And yet strange, extraordinary, and miraculous as this supply of bread may appear, how it sinks into insignificance when compared with that wonder of wonders, the incarnation and offering of the Son of God, the Lord of glory, who came down from heaven to be the spiritual bread of His people. "I am that bread of life." "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead." "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." (John vi. 48-50.) Well did Isaiah call Him Wonderful, and St. Paul exclaim, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) He the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person, made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Him the form of a servant; appeared in the likeness of men. He came, not to His friends, but to His foes; not to condemn but to save—to save, as He tells us, that which was lost.

"God did in Christ Himself reveal,
To chase our darkness by His light,
Our sin and ignorance dispel,
Direct our wandering feet aright,

And bring our souls with pardon blest
To realms of everlasting rest."

6. *It was a gratuitous supply.*

It required neither gold nor silver to obtain as much as they needed. It was without money and without price. So also we are told in the provisions of the Gospel—"He that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isaiah lv. 1.)

A poor woman on one occasion applied to the king's gardener, offering all the money she had for a bunch of grapes for her sick child. The gardener rudely repulsed her and she was going away weeping, but the king's daughter being at hand, and having learned what she wanted, kindly said, "My dear woman, you are mistaken, my father is not a merchant but a king, his business is not to sell but to give." Suiting the word to the act she broke off the grapes and dropped them into her lap.

Even so is it with the Son of God: He is not a merchant, but "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," and it is His business not to sell, but to give.

"Nothing ye in exchange shall give;
Leave all you have and are behind;
Frankly the gift of God receive,
Pardon and peace in Jesus find."

II. DIRECTIONS CONCERNING THE MANNA.

Note—*It came within the reach of all.*

Among the Jews of that day, as now, no doubt there were rich and poor, high and low, learned and illiterate; some camped near the Tabernacle, some more remote. Yet irrespective of station or condition in life, and the

location of tent, the manna fell within reach of every one. So also in the Gospel of Christ.—“To you is the word of this salvation sent.” “The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” “I bring near my righteousness, and my salvation shall not tarry; I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.”

1. *They were to gather it early.*

He that left not his tent till the sun came forth in its heat, lost the provisions of the day. “And when the sun waxed hot it melted.” (Ex. xvi, 21.) The Gospel feast is provided and we are all invited; we must, however, as individuals come for ourselves and partake of Christ in order to possess ourselves of the provision He has made.

“Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” (John vi. 53.) And in order to make the supply certain, gather early, for “Those,” said Christ, “that seek me early shall find me.”

The Lord graciously does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Naaman could not remove the leprosy, but he could dip himself in the Jordan. The disciples were not able to multiply the loaves, but they could break the bread and distribute to the multitude; they had not the power to raise Lazarus from the dead, yet they could roll away the stone. So in the case before us; could not provide the bread of God from heaven, but in both cases can readily gather it when the Lord has sent it so near to us as to be within the reach of all.

“Come and partake the Gospel feast;
Be saved from sin; in Jesus rest;
O taste the goodness of your God,
And eat his flesh, and drink his blood.”

2. *They were to gather regularly till their journeyings ended.*

The supplies of yesterday would not suffice for to-day, nor the abundance of to-day meet the necessities of to-morrow. So the Lord taught them as He teaches us, to feel our constant dependence upon Him. They are instructed to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," and are exhorted to feed upon Christ by faith from day to day, to "go from strength to strength, till we all appear before God in Zion ;" to "Be faithful unto death," and to "Hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

3. *They were to distribute.*

Every one gathered as much as he could, and brought the fruit of his labours into the encampment. It was then measured and divided amongst the several tribes and families according to their number. So with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; our duty is quite plain, we are to *appropriate* and *distribute*. The general principle laid down is this : Gather all you need for yourselves and distribute largely to the multitude. "Freely ye have received, freely give. To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul ; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday ; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones ; and thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not." (Isaiah lviii. 10-11.)

Heads of families, class-leaders, Sabbath school teachers, and the elders of the people, especially preachers of

the Gospel, need to gather largely, for they are called more especially to be "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." Inasmuch then as they are required to be always giving, they should be always receiving. May it always be so, for the Lord's sake. Amen.





THE FAMILY OF GOD.

SERMON XII.

BY REV. WM. J. HUNTER, OTTAWA.

“Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.
—EPHESIANS iii. 15.

“**G**OD setteth the solitary in families.” The first man was a solitary man. God looked upon all the works His hands had made, and pronounced them “good.” But the “Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Amid all the beauty and fertility of an unsullied Paradise he was alone. With all his lofty faculties, and all his Divinely imparted dominion he was *alone*, and therefore God made him a companion, capable of correspondence in thought, and language, and emotion.

The posterity of Adam and Eve have multiplied into millions, and have overspread the face of the earth; but everywhere, and in all ages, we find traces of the Family, that Divine institution begun in Paradise. This vestige of Eden’s happiness remains to comfort the toilers be-

neath the curse—sweet emblem of the brighter home above.

The family on earth !—but for this many a man's hopes were wrecked utterly. When the financial disaster came upon you, and you went home one night, threw yourself upon the sofa, and said, "I am a ruined man," what saved you from the bitterness of despair? Your family. The accents of a true wife fell upon your heart like oil on the troubled waters; and the sight of the little ones all unconscious of your sorrow, nerved you for the conflict. Dashing aside the burning tears you said, "All is not lost while wife, and health, and children remain;" and in this strength you went forth to regain the lost fortune. If there is one place upon earth more like heaven than another, it is the home where dwells a united and happy family. When Jesus would comfort the heart of His disciples, this thought was chosen: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my *Father's House* are many mansions." And thus St. Paul in the lowliness of his prison life consoles himself and the Ephesian Christians with the reflection that he is a part of God's great plan, and a member of the "whole family in heaven and earth." When we consider the saved on earth and in heaven under the figure of a family, we must note the following characteristics:

I. A COMMON PARENTAGE.

Biblical scholars have opened a wide field of verbal criticism in their exposition of this text. Some doubt if the words, "of our Lord Jesus Christ," in the preceding verse are genuine, while others reject them altogether. It is contended that the phrase "of whom" finds its proper antecedent in the word "Father" in the 14th verse; and

this view is opposed on the ground that the nearest antecedent is the "Lord Jesus Christ," and therefore the correct one. The view of the latter class of expositors is that "the Lord Jesus Christ has given the name *Christian*, and all which the name covers, to the one family of God." The former class claim that "it is the Father that gives the name to the family generally, and hence the *patria* seems naturally to refer to the *pater*, the *family* to the *father*. Then again, many of the German commentators take *patria* in the sense of a *race*, and interpret the passage thus:—"Every kind of created being derives its origin out of God the Father, and bears His name as Creator." To this it is objected that the word *patria* naturally means *family* and not *race*, and may be so translated in every passage where it occurs in the New Testament. The point is not worth disputing, for who will question that God is the Father of all the united universe? Dr. Clarke's exposition is the most simple and rational. "Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, the spirits of just men made perfect in a separate state, and all the holy angels in heaven, make but one family, of which God is the Father and Head." The idea that God is the Father of His intelligent creatures is not peculiar to the Scriptures. The desire to stand in a filial relation to the Supreme Being is among the deepest yearnings of the human heart. Even the heathen have claimed a Divine origin. "Certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring." (Acts xvii. 28.) As the Creator, God is the Father of all intelligent creatures. "The Father of spirits;" "the God of the spirits of all flesh;" "one God and Father of all." But men as God's creatures are not so fully His *children* as were Adam and Eve by creation. When they sinned

they lost the tokens of Divine parentage that graced their souls in Eden. By creation and first resemblance they were the children and heirs of God, but by their works they were disinherited. Now all men are born the depraved and condemned offspring of degenerate Adam, "in his own likeness, after his image." So thorough and radical is this moral defilement of the soul, that nothing less than a new birth, a new creation, can restore it to the likeness and image of God. Hence the Scriptures teach that only on the ground of the Redeemer's work, the Holy Spirit's testimony, and our conscious regeneration can we with joyful assurance say "our Father." We become the children of God through faith in Christ; "as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name; which were born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;" and "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Herein differs our sonship from that of the angels. They are His sons by creation only; we by regeneration and adoption as well. Faith makes all the difference amongst men; so that the proverb is true, "Without faith the devil can show as good a coat of arms as we." A common parentage—the parental likeness and disposition given in creation, and retained as in the case of the angels, or lost in the fall and restored and retained through faith in Christ.

II. **UNITY** is another characteristic of the family of God. By this term I mean concord, agreement, a unity

of feeling and sentiment. This unity may be seen in a common resemblance to God. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Even in his fallen, unregenerate condition, man bears some tokens of resemblance to God, as, for example, reason, conscience, immortality. But in the new creation of the soul the moral attributes of God are communicated. His natural attributes, such as eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, are incommunicable—they cannot be imparted to others, they belong to God alone; but His moral attributes, such as goodness, holiness, truth, are capable of being communicated, and they are communicated to all regenerate persons. Believers are partakers of God's moral nature. God and good are convertible terms. God is good. The highest form of goodness is love, and "God is love." To be good therefore, in the highest sense of the word, is to be God-like; and wherever you find a member of the family of God you find this mark—he is God-like.

Love to God is the root, the very essence of religion, and love to the brethren is a natural and necessary result of love to God. "Every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." To see children born of the same parents, and reared under the same roof, without affection and sympathy, is unnatural. True, there may be little family jars, difference of opinion, and even alienation of feeling, but let a common affliction fall upon the family—as in the death of Isaac—and Jacob and Esau, so long estranged, will forget their animosities, and mingle their tears over

the dust that is alike sacred and dear to them both. If we are children of God we are one in character, sympathy and aim. The spirit that can cherish a feeling of jealousy or hatred against a member of God's family, is of the devil, and not of God. It is a sad commentary upon the brotherhood of Christ, that in societies and associations of men, such as the Masonic, the Odd Fellows, and kindred institutions, there is not unfrequently found a warmer and truer friendship than in the Christian Church. I speak no word of condemnation against these organizations, but I emphatically assert that no tie should be so sacred, no bonds of love so pure and strong, as those which unite the members of God's family. "Every departure from the spirit of ardent affection, all neglect of brotherly regard and sympathy, is unworthy of a follower of Christ. Love to God the Father, love to Christ the Saviour, and, not least in importance, love to the children of God, wherever they may be found, is an essential element of Christian character ; and this, burning in purity and power in each Christian's heart, makes his union with his fellow Christians delightful and profitable, and gives to all thus united the character of a happy family."

But while there is in the family of God this unity of feeling and sentiment, there is also as another characteristic—

III. DIVERSITY.

Unity and diversity—these two are not incompatible. In all God's works there is unity and diversity. Flower, and shrub, and tree ; hill and dale ; cloud and sunshine ; ocean, lake, river and cataract ; day and night ; summer and winter. What a delightful unity, what an exquisite diversity. Thus it is in God's family. Amongst the an-

gels there are numerous orders. There is but one Archangel. Then there are "thrones," "dominions," "principalities," "powers," "cherubim" and "seraphim." The human race is one. God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. They all sprang, not from Darwin's theory of development, but from the creating hand of God. There are tribes of men who, from their habits and customs, seem to be but one remove from the beasts that perish ; but wherever you find *humanity*, you find it capable of elevation, improvement, refinement and salvation. And yet how great the diversity ; not simply as witnessed in the Caucasian, the Mongolian, the American, the Negro and the Malay—the five great varieties of the human family ; but climate, customs, manners, tastes, and habits, produce a marked variety in those who live in the same country, and under the same form of civilization. No two persons can be found exactly alike in form and feature, and disposition. And although in families there is what we term a family likeness, yet there is a variety, a diversity of disposition and tastes. A family of all boys or all girls is rather monotonous. And so when all the boys take to the same business or profession ; but when one is ingenious, and takes to engineering ; another financial, and takes to business ; another quick and clear in intellect, and takes to law or medicine, and a fourth, possessing all these talents, devotes them to the highest and noblest of all callings—the work of the Christian ministry—you have the true idea of a family unity and diversity.

How beautifully is all this illustrated in the family of God. One is naturally solemn, almost inclined to melancholy ; another is cheerful and full of hope ; one is like

Paul, logical and argumentative ; another is like Apollos, fluent and eloquent ; a third is like Peter, bold and impassioned ; and a fourth is like John, quiet and patient, leaning upon the Master's bosom ; one is like Martha, "careful and troubled about many things ;" another is like Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus learning the lessons of His love. Brethren, there is a place for every one of us in the family of God ; let us be content to occupy that place. What supreme folly to expect every member of the family to think, and speak and act alike. Why insist upon every warrior wearing Saul's armour ? The sling and stone suit David best ; let him use them. The object is to slay Goliath, the armour is of secondary importance. Don't find fault with that brother because he does the work of the Lord in his own way and not in yours ; don't call him a dry, slow, tame preacher because his style is doctrinal and expository ; don't brand him as a sensationalist when he clothes his thoughts in the current language of the day, and crowds his church with attentive hearers. He could not, if he would, adopt your style and succeed, nor could you his. Your Father is his Father, and He gives to His children diversity of gifts, but one Spirit. Do not imagine that there is no place for you in the affections of the great Father, because you are feeble and insignificant. Father and mother may be *proud* of the son whose talents command wide-spread influence and applause, but the warmest, tenderest place in the heart is reserved for the *invalid* of the family—the poor lame boy or the fair frail girl. When the rest of the children are enjoying their outdoor play, the little sickly one nestles close beside father and mother, and the tears come to their eyes as they say, "God bless him, he cannot share

in the merriment." *God cares for the sickly ones.* "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." He carries the lambs in His bosom. Your very weakness and frailty, if the heart be right, make you the object of His most affectionate solicitude.

Another characteristic of God's family is—

IV. DISPERSION.

"The whole family in heaven and earth." So great has this family become in point of numbers, so widespread the dispersion, it embraces heaven and earth. But mark well the fact, *only* heaven and earth. There are none in purgatory—there is no purgatory in the Bible. Neither are there any members of this family in hell. Its inhabitants are cut off from God forever, cast out from His presence and the "glory of His power." Every member of God's family is in heaven or on earth. The family on earth : who compose it ? For an answer to this question we must consult, not the creeds of men, but the words of Jesus : "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." This is the Scriptural text, and the only true test of connection with the family, and I shall hail the day when before it our denominational banners shall bow, and our denominational fences shall be lowered, so that over and across them we may give a brother's hand to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The family of God on earth is more numerous than many accustomed to look through sectarian glasses think it is. They are not all found within the pale of one church. They do not all dwell in one country, the wide world is their dwelling place.

The Jew considered himself the only favourite of God,

and the Gentile, enriched by the poverty of the Jew, may anathematize the outcast sons of Abraham. The high-church man may ostracise the dissenter, and the dissenter may pity the wax work and millinery of ritualism ; but the family of God is not confined to any of these narrow ecclesiastical inclosures. Repentance and faith, the renewal of the Holy Ghost, vital union with Christ, these, and these alone, constitute us members of the family of God. And where these exist, I care not what the colour of the skin, nor what the denominational shibboleth—the possessor of them is my brother in Christ. Away with that bigotry and exclusiveness which would shut out a true Christian from our hearts because he does not bear our distinctive name. “Of God in Christ the whole family in heaven and earth is *named*.” Not of Wesley, not of Knox, not of Luther, but of *Christ* the family is named. “The disciples were first called *Christians* at Antioch.” Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregationalist, these simply indicate what regiment of the army we belong to, the army is one, and when the conflict is over, and “the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads,” as they pass through the gates into the city this will be their song :

“Let names and sects and parties fall,
And Jesus Christ be all in all.”

The whole family on earth ! how numerous and widespread it is. Our brothers and sisters ! they are found in China, in Africa, in Hindostan, in the islands of the sea, amid the snows of the north, in the sunny climes of the south. Out of every tribe, and tongue, and people they

have been redeemed unto God. Kings and Queens, Princes and Presidents, are found amongst them; for many of these have bowed the knee to Jesus. Senators and statesmen, soldiers and sailors have rallied round the red-cross sign. Men of wealth and men of learning, widows with their mites, and beggars with their sores, hoary heads with their crowns of glory, ripe manhood with its seal of strength, fair youth with its flush of beauty, smiling infancy with its heart of innocence—all these we hail and greet as members of the “whole family upon earth.”

But my text intimates that a portion of the family are in heaven. Ah! yes; there is the family residence, there dwells the loving Father, and the elder Brother, and the family servants, “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” Thank God a large portion of the family are in heaven. Abel, the first martyr, was the first to get home to the family residence. Straight up to the Throne he went, took down his golden harp, and struck the first note of the new song ever heard in heaven—“Unto Him that loved me and washed me from my sins in His own blood, and hath made me a king and a priest unto God and His father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

How soon the first family was divided; how soon Adam and Eve were taught to set their affections on things above. One earthly tie was severed, and a new silken cord was woven to bind their hearts to the throne of God. And from that day to the present what multitudes have gone home to the family residence. Patriarchs and Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs, and a great multitude that no man can number. John saw them in his vision, and asked one

of the elders, saying, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" You remember the answer. "These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." When we speak of these we are accustomed to say "they are dead," but they are not dead—they are far more alive than we are. They are safe, safe at home. And who amongst us has not contributed to swell the number? You have, and so have I. You received a telegram one day that made you tremble and turn pale. It said "come at once, mother is dying." You started by the first train and arrived at midnight. All was quiet around the old home, but there was light in every window. And when you opened the door you were met with a flood of tears and kisses, and when you went upstairs and into the death chamber, mother opened her eyes and recognised you, and father bowed his head and wept. You were a strong man—many years ago you had left the parental roof—but when the recollection of a parental love came in like a flood upon your soul, the great deep of your heart was opened, and you felt how hard it was to give her up, even in her old age. But, see! Yonder, before the throne, is mother now—grey hair all gone—wrinkles all gone—she is clothed upon with immortality.

And that wife whom you gave up because you could not help it; that husband who blessed his young wife and little babe with his expiring breath—they, too, have gone home to the family residence. And the little ones; O how many of these are in heaven. There are few earthly homes without some memento of departed little ones—

“ There is no flock however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there ;
There is no fireside howsoe’er defended,
But has one vacant chair.”

You can never forget when your little one sickened and died. It was the idol and joy of the family. But it grew sick, and you sent for the doctor, and he felt its pulse and left some medicine, and when you questioned him as to the nature of the disease he said : “ You know doctors can’t do much for children.” And when he came again the next day baby was worse, and he said : “ Perhaps you would like me to call in another doctor just for consultation.” And then your heart grew heavy, and that night baby died, and has been buried in the deep grave of your heart ever since. But where is baby now? In heaven—your baby still, and like David you comfort yourself with the thought that though “ he shall not return to you, you shall go to him.” O the graves of the dead, how I wish I could transfer them from the cemetery to this church just for an hour. I would arrange them in rows before you, and then I would pass between the rows and read aloud the epitaphs your hearts dictated while they were yet tender with the first sorrow of bereavement. Alas ! do not your lives give the lie to those epitaphs ? You buried the loved ones in sure and certain hope of the resurrec-

tion unto everlasting life. You sat by the bed of the dying one with the cold hand in yours, and said again and again, "Dear darling one, we shall meet again—meet in heaven." But here you are to-day, unpardoned and unsaved. Have they not been watching you all the time, and if it be possible for sorrow to enter heaven, are they not sorry when they see your conduct? O ye to whom these words come like voices from the past—from the little cradle, and the little cot, and the little grave, I pray you by the memory of all these things—by the memory of a mother's love and a father's prayers—by the memory of a husband's grave and a wife's last look of tenderness—I pray you come *now* to your Father and my Father, to your Saviour and my Saviour, for the new heart and the new name. For, without these, without repentance, faith, pardon, adoption and regeneration, you cannot become a member of the "whole family in heaven and earth." Friends of the Lord Jesus, and brethren in Christ, I speak to you in the beautiful words of another, "We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. They are triumphing with their King, we are fighting His battles. They are in Canaan, we are in the wilderness. We have the manna, the guiding pillar and the frail tabernacle, they, the corn and the fixed temple of the New Jerusalem. We are following in their train, and our faith is quickened and strengthened by the thought that they watch us in our struggles. Stand fast, my brethren. Do not yield. Thou art not alone in the fight. Jesus is with thee. The Apostles and Prophets in heaven are before thee; the glorious army of martyrs see thee; the Eye that met Stephen's in his trial is upon thee. And O consider the reward. Life, purity, holiness, the fellowship of eternal

love, the presence of the Son of God, unutterable nearness to God Himself, enlarged and perpetually increasing knowledge. These are before thee, and are they not worth struggling for? Perish the sins that would deprive me of this hope, be they the dearest, the sweetest that ever deceived man. Shall I listen to the world or heed its siren voice when Jesus calls me to follow Him? Shall I hesitate between a few years and eternity? Shall I yield to influences which must degrade me, rather than the hopes that can make me a man, a conqueror, and an heir of heaven? NEVER. By God's help I will take my lot with the saints and "follow the Lamb whither-soever He goeth." AMEN.





THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

SERMON XIII.

BY REV. C. FRESHMAN, D.D., OF INGERSOLL.

“This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”—PSALM cxviii. 24.



HERE are two things which influence the Christian wherever Providence directs his wanderings, and signalize his national and religious character. They are the divine worship of God, and the holy Sabbath. They are intended to remind him also of the covenant made between God and His people.

These two are closely connected, as may be seen if we carefully study the commandment of God as found in Lev. xix. 30, “Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord.” Here the Lord enjoins upon His people to *keep* His sabbaths and to *reverence* His sanctuary, showing the necessity of their united connection, and the injury which must follow to the Church of God should they be separated.

We know by experience too, that wherever and whenever God’s Sabbaths are kept then and there are His

sanctuaries revered, and the worship of God is preserved in its primitive purity, simplicity, and solemnity. And where, on the other hand, His Sabbaths are desecrated by unhallowed worldly pursuits, where temporal things wholly absorb and engross the human mind, the services of religion fall into decay ; for with decay of piety comes cold, dull, formal religious services, and almost forsaken sanctuaries. When the mind is crowded by worldliness it cannot aspire to things sacred, spiritual, and sublime. Hence the prophets of God frequently, when they spake against the prevailing corruption of the times, predicted the decline and downfall of religion, and with it the destruction of the empire. "*Thou hast despised Mine holy things and hast profaned My Sabbaths.*" "*Therefore have I poured out Mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath.*"—(Ezek. xxii. 8, 31.)

I. IN THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS OUR SACRED THEME WE ASK THE QUESTION: *Is this day (Sunday) the day which God hath made, and appointed to be the day of rest for us? Is this the day in which we may "rejoice and be glad in it?"*

Is this the day we are to keep holy? We answer it is, and we are borne out in this in the words of our text ; also in the words of the commandment, (Exod. xx. 8-12,) and in Deut. v. 12-16. A reference is made in this latter text to the redemption of Israel, wrought out by the hand of Moses, when they were delivered from Egyptian bondage, which redemption was only temporal, yet a type of that which is the spiritual redemption of the whole race of Adam accomplished by Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary. The Apostle Paul says: "Let no man there-

fore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days : which are the shadow of things to come." (Col. ii. 16, 17.) In Eccles. iv. 15 it is said : " I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead." Hosea says, " By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out from Egypt, and by a prophet is he to be preserved." There are two covenants, two dispensations, and two kinds of redemption, which present two reasons for keeping the Sabbath day. The Sabbath of old was kept in remembrance of God's rest from creation and of temporal redemption—but the Sabbath under the new dispensation is to be kept as the day of the Lord on which the great work of spiritual redemption was accomplished ; when the Son of Man, who is Lord also of the Sabbath, arose from the dead, and made this day for us to rejoice and be glad in it.

" 'Twas great to speak a world from naught—
'Twas greater to redeem."

Christ was the end of the law. Christ lay in the grave during the Sabbath of old, burying as it were with Him all the types, shadows, and symbols of the old dispensation, and when He arose on the first day He introduced to the world a new covenant, a new dispensation, a new Sabbath with all its attendant blessings.

The Israelites of old, as well as the Jews of present times, rejoice in their Sabbath, because they were delivered from Egyptian bondage, from tyranny and slavery ; but this day (Sunday), which the Lord hath made for us, to rejoice and be glad in, is the remembrancer of the great spiritual deliverance which our Lord Jesus Christ

has accomplished for us. “ *This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*”

The manna did not descend from heaven to feed the Jews upon the Sabbath of old ; but the Holy Ghost descended upon the Christian Church on the first day of the week, or on the Christian Sabbath. This was a wise arrangement of Providence, that this great event in the history of our race should take place upon that day.

It is also noticeable that the most remarkable appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ to His apostles, after His resurrection, took place upon the Christian Sabbath. This day is intended to remind us of that resurrection. Christian, if you are risen with Christ, and have entered with Him into the kingdom—if you are born again of the Spirit of God, all old things have passed away, and all things become new, then you know what it is to be in the Spirit on the Lord’s day—to rejoice and be glad in it. How much comfort does the Christian enjoy, who, after the toils of six days, enters upon the Christian Sabbath, and who in the sanctuary receives the glorious sounds falling upon his ears, “Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest: take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.”

II. THE SACRED HOURS OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH ARE INTENDED TO ELEVATE THE SPIRIT OF MAN, AND TO RAISE HIS MIND HEAVENWARD.

No true Christian can be indifferent to its claims. He who is truly a man of God will make a proper use of this precious gift of life, and in it dedicate himself to God.

Men sometimes, through the whole course of their earthly existence, are forgetful of the claims of the sacred Sab-

bath; they never once think of its uses; they grope about in the dark, unstable and aimless, without ever bringing to mind that the end of life must come sooner or later; but when their career draws to a close they discover that they have missed the great aim of life, and would gladly live their lives over again. When the first ray of spiritual life breaks upon their darkened minds and dissipates the mist which has enveloped their souls, they become fearfully conscious that their days are numbered, and of their great error in squandering away this precious gift of God; but they cannot recall the Sabbaths which have fled and gone forever. Oh, let Christian people think of the end of life—of the resurrection of the body—of the coming judgment day—and the eternal world, and live to God; not, childlike, feast themselves upon the world's trifles, or give up themselves entirely to indulgence in worldly pleasure to the neglect of that which is truly valuable, and makes life precious, not to forget virtue, a beautiful human embellishment, nor the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, nor life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel. These are the grand themes taught in the temples of God on the sacred Sabbath day. These are among the hid treasures, the precious gifts of God, from Him who is our “*wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*” Let the Christian sound the organ, strike the cymbal, and strike the harp-strings, and let all the sons and daughters of God sing for joy, make merry and be glad.

The Jewish Sabbath was intended to remind the Jews of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. This was a most important event in the history of the Jews. It was intended to remind them of the very birth of their

nation, which is as wonderful as its preservation is without example in the history of mankind.

That deliverance forms the basis of their claim to be the "*chosen people of God*," and was their first step toward the kingdom of heaven, for now their minds were unfettered, they possessed liberty to think for themselves, and they could now use that liberty in opening their hearts to receive the beneficent and fructifying influence of the Divine precepts ; that man alone who has been emancipated from the degrading influence of spiritual bondage can devote his life to the service of God, and to the practice of brotherly love and charity. The slave who pines away under the iron hand of a tyrant who is constantly loading him with burdens hard to be borne, has no life, no heart, no family or vocation, no will of his own—his will is to do that of his tyrant taskmaster—but not so with the people of God, who are set free by the blood of Christ, they are "free indeed." "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John viii, 36.) During the reign of that darkness which covered the land of Egypt just previous to the deliverance of the children of Israel, light was in the dwelling places of God's people ; so, the true children of God have ever light in their souls, in their dwelling places, and in their sanctuary. Christian, if you are redeemed from all iniquity, and your heart is free, you are the subject of humane feeling, of noble sentiments, of glowing life, reviving love. "Delight thyself also in the Lord ; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." (Psalm xxxvii, 4.) "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day ; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own

ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words : then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord ; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.— (Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.)

III. WE ARE COMMANDED BY GOD HIMSELF TO LABOUR ON SIX DAYS OF THE WEEK AND REST ON THE SEVENTH OR SABBATH DAY. Man was born to labour, and by that means to develop his physical and mental powers—in this way to promote his own good through the whole of his earthly existence. Activity is life, slothfulness is death. There is activity in plants—in every creature throughout the vegetable kingdom, but there is no consciousness, no mental faculties. Among the animal tribes there is activity and consciousness, but no freedom of will. Man alone of all the creatures of God possesses all these : he has both physical and mental powers, and a will to make choice of good or evil, which will is free. Man therefore should see to it that he, more than all the creatures of God, should conform his will to the supreme will of God, and his actions should receive the approbation of the Most High. He who labours to no other purpose but to enjoy life, lowers himself with the brute creation, and lives uselessly.

On the Sabbath day it is profitable to meditate, and how many glorious themes present themselves to the thoughtful, religious mind. Life, its highest aim, man's origin, duties, trials, death and final destiny. His relation to God and his fellow creatures. The true enjoyments of life, the hand of Providence supplying us on all sides with precious gifts, temporal and spiritual, and constituting man capable of the enjoyment of all the blessings

of Providence. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes : but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." (Eccles. xi. 9.)

Industry properly employed and innocent pleasure soberly enjoyed are sanctioned by religion, while the sinful pleasures of the world are accounted exceedingly sinful, and bring down upon those who indulge in them the wrath of the Most High. We should therefore employ our talents, develop our endowments to advantage, and enjoy the fruits thereof with gladness. Then we shall attain unto that state of perfection which will qualify us for immortal blessedness. The duties of the sacred Sabbath are all intended to impress upon our minds the fact that without holiness no man shall see God, and to lead us to seek that state of preparation that eventually, when freed from earthly trouble and perplexity, we may partake of that heavenly blessedness promised to us in the Word of God.

And now, beloved brethren, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," for the Lord hath said, "Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it." The Sabbath was made for man. Oh that we might cultivate that spirit which will fully accord with the spirit of the Sabbath day ; not of frivolity and sin—but that which is spiritual, devout, God-like and heavenly, not thinking our own thoughts or speaking our own words, but ever meditating upon that state of existence which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive—the sacred Sabbath of eternal rest, of which our earthly sabbath is only a type. Oh, that it may be ours to enjoy the hallowed rest of that glorious Sabbath forever. *Amen.*



KNOWLEDGE IS LIFE.

SERMON XIV.

By REV. A. RAYNOR, M.A., PROFESSOR OF MODERN
LANGUAGES AND ENGLISH LITERATURE.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”—ST. JOHN xvii. 3.



IF we take the knowledge of God here spoken of to be knowledge in the ordinary sense of the word, then no one of us, and no finite spirit may ever know eternal life. The question of God's nature, and even the question of His existence, can never be certainly established by pure reasoning, or by a merely intellectual operation. The strongest and subtlest minds have in all ages sought to set these questions at rest, and the result is, that to such minds, apart from evidence beyond the reason, God is still the *unknown* God, and men are almost agreed to call Him the *unknowable*. This is the last despairing word of human philosophy, and it is only a late verification of the judgment of ages long gone by. “Canst thou by search-

ing find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? it is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" He brings us then no glad evangel who tells we may gain eternal life, knowing God and Jesus Christ, when by *knowing* he means the demonstration of God's existence, and the comprehension of His nature and attributes.

But there is a knowledge of another kind—a knowledge of the heart and experience, as well as a knowledge of the head or intellect. Knowledge of the one kind is gained when the mind turns its powers to certain problems and masters them; knowledge of the other kind is gained when great principles of truth or justice, of beauty or goodness—principles too large for our comprehension, enter into our souls and influence and determine our actions and feelings in such a way that we seem to be possessed of them rather than to possess them. Let me illustrate by something still more simple and concrete. See, in the darkened study, a single pencil of light enter through a small hole pierced in the closed shutter and fall through the heavy, dusty air; and see that stooped and sickly man who is studying the light. He unbraids the iris hues and weaves them again into the white light. He has studied much on the properties of light and air, and on their influence on the health of mind and body, and he knows much more if you will than any other living man about these things. And yet, after all, what does *he* know of the beauties of colour, and of the quickening sunlight, and of the exhilarating breeze, shut up there from day to day in that dark and musty room? What does he know compared with that wandering bare-foot boy, who, tired with chasing the butterfly, throws himself down in the

sweet clover to bask in the warm, sunshiny air? The philosopher knows a great deal *about* light and air, but he does not *know light and air*, and he is dying for lack of that knowledge. The boy has never asked himself a curious question about these things, and yet they are hourly filling him with the joy of life. Just so, a man may be filled with the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, and yet know very little about that divine source of eternal life. The divine influence may so possess the man as to move him to thoughts and words and deeds utterly above himself, and yet the nature of that presence and influence remains forever a mystery.

In considering this knowledge of God, we ask,

I. WHAT MAY WE KNOW OF GOD, AND WHEREIN DOES HE REVEAL HIMSELF?

II. WHAT ARE THE AVENUES BY WHICH THIS LIGHT OR KNOWLEDGE IS RECEIVED INTO THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS? and

III. WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF THIS KNOWLEDGE ON THE HUMAN CHARACTER AND DESTINY?

I. *Having seen the vanity of presuming to explain the mysterious nature of God and unfold the modes of His being, we turn to the humbler but wiser task of trying to understand how far and where He has made Himself known and felt, or, to use a common word in a wide sense, HOW FAR AND WHERE HE HAS REVEALED HIMSELF.*

Through His works in Creation God impresses human spirits with a certain sense of His own eternal power and Godhead. That the forms and motions of created things, and the whole aspect of nature *do* produce such an impression, do awaken in the human spirit a sense of God, is simply a fact. The only question is as to how this im-

pression is produced. At present we have to do with the fact, and the fact is that the instinct of worship is awakened in man by the contemplation of created things. The wild Indian hears God's awful voice in the thunder and in the cataract, and owns His goodness in the plentiful supply of fish and game. He fears God's anger in the pestilence, and has a vague presentiment of forgiveness and eternal life when he gazes through the golden vistas of the setting sun. And this is not the mere superstition of the uncultured soul; it is the experience of man in every grade of culture. The most advanced chemists and physicists of modern times, men who trace the workings of nature in their subtlest forms, come from their studies with reverent hearts. Every atom of matter whispers to them of the mysterious yet faithful power, every living form tells of the one supreme all governing mind, and the vast and star-hung systems move through the infinitudes of space,

"Forever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine."

Again, through the order and course of things in human life, God impresses human spirits with a further sense of His own presence and government. This also is an unquestionable fact. Men instinctively ascribe the retributions of this life to the watchful control of some power of goodness, and they have a certain hopeful or fearful anticipation of final award by that Power, according to the deeds done in the body. The wicked man feels this even when he is most prosperous in his iniquity, and hand joins in hand to secure him against human vengeance, he feels that he shall not go unpunished by that unseen all

seeing Power, and he is disquieted by a fearful looking for of judgment. The good man feels it too, even when he is suffering for righteousness' sake, and he appeals in hope to the final decision of the righteous Judge of all the earth.

Besides these natural, indirect and constant modes of revelation, God has at sundry times made special and more immediate manifestations of Himself to impress men with new aspects of His nature, and new views of His designs. The lives of the Patriarchs, of Moses and of the Prophets in sacred story, furnish illustrations of this ; and I do not see what warrant we have to assume that such revelations were entirely confined to ancient times, or to the men of whom we read in our sacred writings. Socrates and Plato, Zoroaster, Mahomet and Buddha—these men stand out in the gloom of the Gentile ages, revealed by a light of the knowledge of God. It is true that light may look like a blot when held between us and the sun of our gospel day, but it is also true that the light that was in them seemed strangely brilliant in contrast with the darkness of the ages and the people amongst whom they stood. Whence came that light, and whence the constraining impulse felt by these men to give the light to all about them? I must say that I cannot look upon them as inspired of the Evil One, the Father of Lies, but rather as lesser Gentile Prophets, men whose eyes were half-opened to the light of the heavenly vision, and who, with all their weakness and errors, laboured sometimes under the burden of the Lord.

But do not fancy, dear brethren, that because I have dwelt thus on the glimpses of the only true God that are reflected from Nature and Providence, and that flash on us

from the prophetic spirit—do not fancy that I am unmindful of the brightness of the Father's glory that beams on us in the face of Jesus Christ. God made the sun to rule by day, but it is the same God who made the moon and stars to rule by night ; and may we not look with reverence and gratitude at these, even when we glory in the greater Light ? I am not afraid that I have spoken too highly of the dimmer revelations, but I am oppressed with a sense of my inability to speak worthily of the Incarnate Revelation—of Him who could truly say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Oh for wisdom and grace to speak aright, and to be silent aright, on this exalted theme ! In order to realize, if possible, how much of the knowledge of the only true God we owe to Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, let me ask you to try to leave out of your conception of God everything that the world has learned of Him from the Divine Revealer. Pass this act of oblivion, and you will find your conception of God suffer a strange and dire eclipse. The brilliance of His holiness is dimmed and almost quenched, and the quickening warmth of His eternal love for man is quite shut off. Penitence and prayer, and faith and hope are almost dead, and love is turned to stone. And in this horrible light, or rather "darkness visible," how changed and ominous does all around appear ! There is no pensive hue above us, no quiet green below, and all bright and gladsome hues turn pale. We cannot recognise a friend in those draped forms about us, or catch the glance of brotherhood in those dark faces. Oh, Jesus ! thou who art the Light of the world, appear once more, that we may see our Father God in heaven, and our brother man below.

It is only in the spirit and teachings, and wondrous works of Jesus Christ whom God hath sent, that the world has learnt how to distinguish aright between the only true God and the world that He has made. Apart from the knowledge of God in Christ, we see in the moving universe only the ponderous and remorseless sweep of a vast machine—crushing in its unthinking course whatever does not call itself brute matter. But in Jesus Christ we know Him “who is over all, God blessed forever.” To Him is committed “all power in heaven and in earth.” The forces that work in nature are no longer senseless and irresponsible; but they are the ministers of Him who makes all things work together for good to them that love God—who brings good out of seeming evil, and who guides the world and all created things to one far-off divine event. Apart from Jesus Christ, men feel indeed the burden and the pain of sin; but no where amongst the sons of men, or amongst the gods many and lords many, whom they have invented, can their wearying, longing eyes behold one able and willing to save. It is only in Jesus Christ the crucified, that the world can see the atoning and vicarious suffering of the only true God—the God who is love. Here, and here alone, is the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. Here “behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!”

I have sometimes wished that I had been born in the darkness of heathenism, in order to know more of the beautiful light of the gospel by seeing it with unfamiliar eyes; but when I think of the distracting doubts, of the fear of false gods, and the mistrust of man, of the groanings and travails of prayers the heathen are never

taught to pray, and of the yearning hopes and aspirations that take form for a moment, only to sink back again into the chaos of despair—then from the deep places of my soul there goes up a psalm to Him whose goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.

II. OUR SECOND STUDY OF THIS SUBJECT IS ON THE AVENUES BY WHICH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE GOD FINDS AN ENTRANCE INTO THE SOUL OF MAN—the powers of apprehension by which this knowledge is received—the sources of conviction of the supreme spiritual verities

Some objections may as well be met here as further on. Why does not God make so striking a display of His awful presence that it would be impossible for any man in his senses to harbour a doubt as to the existence and government of God? Why does He not write His name across the dome of heaven, that every eye may see? Why does He not shake the earth with the trumpet of His archangel, that every ear may hear? Why does He not at once and always visit the sinner with unmistakable marks of His displeasure, and reward the righteous with conspicuous tokens of His favour? These questions I used to ask myself, and perhaps some of you ask them now; but it seems to me that it is but to ask in other words why God should put us to any probation whatsoever, and why He should seek to develop our moral natures. I do not think there could be any real probation, or any healthy moral development if God had done as we have supposed in these questions. Recollect His object is not so much to make us do His will as to cultivate in us characters that *delight to do His will*, and take pleasure in all things true and beautiful and good. Such spiritual growth could not take place, if the time of our probation were turned into

one long judgment day. We would in that case think so much of heaven and hell that we could not stop to think of sin and holiness. The spring is now about to come, and soon the growing warmth will melt the ice and snow. The genial sun will kiss the tears from the face of the waking earth, cherish the numb germs of bloom and verdure, and by and by bring forth the mellow fruits and golden grain. Need I ask you why God does not fling at once the burning rays of the tropic sun upon the torpid life of March? Because, in a very short time that excess of heat would destroy the life which in its moderation it will cherish and develop. Just so it is in the moral development of the human soul. The germinating virtues, the spiritual independence, the love of the right and good for its own sake, the moral choice—all would be forced beyond all possibility of healthy growth, our own personality would be completely absorbed, and our wills overborne by that irresistible spiritual presence. And yet, whilst no man can see God and live, it is only in the knowledge of God that we can find eternal life.

Again, it is sometimes thought hard that the power to discern God clearly is not given to mere intellect, so that a man might by patient study gain the full knowledge of God, just as he may gain the demonstration of truths in geometry. This objection or difficulty is not unlike what we have just been considering, and it is partly met in the same way. Moreover, we have already seen that it is not *knowing about* the true God and Jesus Christ, but *knowing* God, that has to do with our eternal life, and this last kind of knowledge, the intellect alone, in the very nature of things, could never reach.

The conscious reason, however, is not excluded from

the spiritual discernment, but much more is included. That intimate knowledge which we gain of our fellowmen—a knowledge that often moulds our characters and changes our lives—is seldom or never gained by simple reasoning. There is something repulsive in the very thought of this gross method of dealing with a human spirit, much more with the infinite and eternal spirit of God. Accordingly, God seems to have withdrawn Himself from the rude advances of the conscious reason only to make Himself more fully known in simple and more intimate ways. Let me give the name of the *unconscious reason* to some of these subtle powers of discernment, or ways by which we reach the knowledge of God. When we reason consciously we see clearly how we draw certain conclusions from certain premises, but the unconscious reason comes to correct conclusions without taking distinct notice of the premises. We all reason more or less in this way. Something in a man's look or tone of voice tells us of the friendly or unfriendly spirit that may not show itself for days or years. We can not see exactly where the change is, but we are indistinctly conscious of some change or other in expression which harmonizes with the change of feeling. This indistinct perception of relations is often as true and much more wonderful in its intimations than the glaring light of conscious reason. I think it is chiefly by this subtle perception of relations that the visible works of God impress our minds with a sense of His invisible things, and that the course of life and providence suggests the moral government of God. This quickness and delicacy of discernment is in common things more marked in women than in men. How quick is woman to judge of character from its insensible symptoms

in conduct, and in many cases she has a truthfulness and force of conviction that leave the slow conscious reason of the stronger, and perhaps coarser, mind plodding and climbing far below. The greater religiousness of women, in some aspects of religion, is due to this fineness of the unconscious reason not to any weakness of mind. Here, too, may be found one reason why genuine scepticism is almost wholly confined to men trained to the exercise of the sensuous reason, and disposed to neglect all other powers of perception. On the other hand to the poor, the young, and all classes and nations left to the natural balance of the conscious and the unconscious reason—these are universally religious—to these the gospel is preached, and the things of the kingdom revealed whilst hid from the wise and prudent.

But it was not enough that Nature and Providence should thus suggest the person and nature of the only true God. It might have been sufficient had our spirits remained in perfect health and well attuned to the Divine harmonies; but, with perceptions dulled by sin—with earthly and sensual impulses complicating the intimations of immortality, with a secret and malicious foe at hand to mislead and to destroy—this personal suggestiveness of nature and providence could never bring us to a saving knowledge of the truth of God. We must either have new powers of perception bestowed upon us, or the object to be perceived must come nearer to us. This is what has taken place, and the great object of the incarnation is to teach us the knowledge of the only true God in the person of Jesus Christ. Here God comes into direct personal contact with men—spirit to spirit, and heart to heart. We are no longer left to the hints of feeble reason

—we are in the presence of a person surrounded with all the familiar limits of personality.

In this way God brings Himself within the reach of our personal powers of apprehension. What these powers are it is not easy to define. The unconscious reason is no doubt included, but there is something further—something still more subtle. There is a strange influence proceeding from a personal presence—a kind of surrounding atmosphere or medium, through which, without sign or word, there may pass a recognition, a thought, a feeling. The most marvellous phenomenon of this kind in history is the influence of the personal character of Jesus Christ, who was God, manifest in the flesh. From Him there went an influence that brought out all other characters, and revealed the secrets of all hearts. The poor and suffering felt that there was sympathy and help in Him. The proud and hypocritical and resolute in sin felt in Him an irreconcilable antagonist; the publicans and outcasts, in whom remained a germ of goodness, felt in Him a power to pardon and save. Even the honest sceptics who went to hear Him, full of hostile prejudice, came away saying, “Never man spake like this man.” His own disciples were drawn to Him and held by Him through this personal influence and attachment. They did not *understand* Him, but they knew Him, and in Christ Jesus our Lord they learned to love God with that love from which in after years “not life nor death nor any other creature could separate them.”

It is impossible for us to gain the knowledge of God in exactly the same way as did the personal followers of Jesus Christ, nevertheless the same knowledge is for us. The life of Christ was the point of time when the flame of the know-

ledge and love of God touched the great heart of mankind. It is the same flame that has passed from heart to heart, and from age to age. They saw, and believed and loved ; but our blessedness is none the less, but rather greater, who have not seen, yet do believe ; and our loyalty is just as reverent and true to Him "whom not having seen we love." But yet God has not taken His presence from us. When the Incarnate One returned to the bosom of the Father, He did not leave us orphans and comfortless. We, too, have a *real presence*, a fellowship with God, one even more expedient for us than the continued presence of Christ in the flesh. Now it is not only on the shore of Galilee, or in the temple, or in the garden, or on the mountain top that we know the personal presence, but through the gift of the Holy Ghost, lo ! to the end of the earth He is with us always, His spirit witnesses with ours, and we have fellowship with the Father and the Son. By the presence of God in the person of Jesus Christ the light and flame of the knowledge and love of God were kindled in a few hearts, but in the gift of the Holy Ghost there is a personal presence through all time and amongst all generations, to feed the light and blow upon the flame.

In the manner in which the Holy Spirit holds communion with ours there is no doubt much that is mysterious. There was mystery in the way in which the spirit of Christ influenced the minds and hearts of men. There is mystery even in the way in which the mere presence of one human spirit influences another ; but let us not confound the mysterious working of spiritual powers with the arbitrary lawlessness of magic and the *hocus-pocus* of superstition. When we understand the strange though perfectly

natural working of our own spirit, then we may be in a better position to study the operation of the Holy Ghost. Meantime we can only feel the power thereof, though we may not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth.

III. IT REMAINS FOR US TO CONSIDER THE INFLUENCE OF THIS EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD ON HUMAN CHARACTER AND DESTINY : “ *This is Eternal Life.*”

A moment ago we were talking of mysteries. Here is another mystery. I do not mean eternal life, but this mortal physical life. Who can tell us what it is? And yet we all know that it is, and that it is in us. We know some of the powers of life, some of its conditions, some things hostile to life, and others friendly ; but life itself is an unknown power, and perhaps unknowable. Can we expect less difficulty in understanding *spiritual* life?

Knowledge is life. Take food, and warmth, and light and air from the living body, take from it all freedom of motion and what then becomes of the animal life? Take faith, and hope, and love from the soul, oppress it with a sense of impotence, and guilt and self-contempt, and steep it in sensual passions, and what then becomes of the spiritual life? It is lost, hopelessly and forever, in *eternal death*. My dear brethren, do not take this for the language of a preacher who is bound to employ such forms of expression, and bent on bringing facts of human experience into harmony with a system of theology. Let me ask you to look at the facts for yourselves, and then as wise men judge ye what I say, and tell me if I am wrong in pronouncing the soul *dead* that is without God and without hope. There is no grasp of faith in the arm, no light of hope in the eye, no warmth and throb of love in the heart. The form erect, and upward look of lordly independence

and moral purity are stricken, bleeding, crushed under the weight of conscious guilt and conscious impotence. There is no vital energy to resist unfriendly, unspiritual forces, and the higher life corrupts into all that is earthly, sensual, devilish, just as the dead body rots into living worms. Oh tell me is not such a man dead while he yet liveth—more dead than should he cease to be ?

Now see how the knowledge of God brings life to such a soul, and how, at the touch of Christ, who is the Life, that soul is raised from the dead. The first symptom of returning life by the power of Jesus is a painful sense of sin and holiness. The awakened soul looks on Him who is fairer than the sons of men, holy, harmless, undefiled, and then for the first time realizes his own foul and deadly malady. He has a sense of purity, but yet he finds himself chained to corruption, and he cries out in bitterness and horror, "O wretched man that I am ; who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Again he looks to the Holy One, and now he sees more than holiness—he sees pity and power to save, and invitation. In agony between despair within and hope in the Christ so pure and strong, yet pitiful, the soul dares to lift its wild eyes and search the face of God in Christ. Inspired by that look, faith breaks from dead despair with the loud and living cry, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole." And now the dead ears are unlocked with the sweet words of healing and forgiveness, "I will, be thou clean, go thy way and sin no more." Oh the blessedness of the hour when the soul first comes to this knowledge of God in Christ, realizes the atoning love and the forgiving grace, and *lives !*

Then begins the great work of love, the work of trans-

forming the sinner into the image of God the Saviour. The saved and pardoned soul is filled with a new and vital power, the power of an endless life—even of love for God that must make the soul like God. It is often said, simply and truly, of a good and noble man, “You have only to know him to love him.” With infinitely greater force is this true of the knowledge and the love of God. In Jesus Christ whom God hath sent we learn the boundless love and goodness of God, and thus learn to love Him because He hath first loved us. It is also a law of our nature that we are assimilated to the character of the object loved. I can therefore think of no greater calamity in life, or of anything more disastrous to the character, than the constant admiring love of an unworthy object. So, on the other hand, I can think of no greater blessing in life than the intimate knowledge and true love of some being of transparent truthfulness and goodness. How the one life seems to transfuse and purify the other ! to inspire it with its own power, and grace it with its own tenderness ! Even so by the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord do we become partakers of the divine nature, and grow up into Him in all things.

Eternal life is the natural and fitting destiny of these souls thus filled with the knowledge and love of God. God gave His son to death that He might develop in us the powers of life and immortality, and now so long as God Himself shall live, must they live who are created anew in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.



THE IMPARTIALITY OF GOD'S LOVE.

SERMON XV.

BY THE REV. JAMES ROY, M.A.

“With good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”—EPHESIANS vi. 7, 8.



NDER the stern rule of the ancient empires, the individual life was of little importance. Men existed for the state, not the state for men. Christianity came appealing to the individual heart, and made the state feel its power in the slow, but certain, processes of an indirect influence.

Its promises of liberty were misinterpreted ; and some, whom fortune had placed in a subordinate position, thought themselves justified in severing bonds that appeared inconsistent with the importance Christian teaching attached to each separate soul.

The text was penned, doubtless, to correct such misapprehensions, and to show that, while master and servant

were alike important before God, the conventional arrangements of society are not to be suddenly disregarded, and that the great ends of life were as easily attainable in its humble walks as in those apparently superior. It teaches :

I. THE IMPARTIALITY OF GOD'S LOVE ; and

II. THE BEARING OF THIS PRINCIPLE ON OUR ORDINARY LIFE.

I. GOD'S IMPARTIAL LOVE.

1. *It is not confined to particular forms of goodness.*—Society crystallizes into various forms. Men of similar tastes aggregate. No theories of comprehensive or universal unity have prevented this ; and none can do so. Even Romanism has witnessed within its own pale Dominicans and Franciscans, Jesuits and Port Royalists, Old Catholics and Ultramontanes, rising and contending for their peculiarities with a virulence often beyond all the polemics of Protestantism.

In both these great divisions of Christianity, each community stamps with marks of peculiar favour the forms of goodness to which itself is attached.

One sect is distinguished by a highly metaphysical theology, and by stern uprightness in business. Another is strongly emotional. Another sect (for even Bishop Heber, in his life of Jeremy Taylor, calls it such) loves beauty of form and rite ; and is kind to its poor. Yet another devotes itself to labours of a humanitarian character, fighting hard battles with political and social wrongs. Where no overshadowing thought of oneness under a common head reminds each body of the brotherhood of the other, the world rings with anathemas. The Roundhead sees in the service of the Cavaliers nothing but the forms of a hated apostacy from the truth,

The Cavalier finds, in the narrow and wordy Puritans, nothing but cant and hypocrisy. Orthodox and Heterodox slight each other's mode of serving God. "Wars of Succession," less bloody, perhaps, than those of politics, but none the last disastrous, disturb the calm of Christian charity. The value of good men's toils is measured by artificial standards; and the Christian world forgets, in the absence of a true appreciation of the love that holds the star and carves the microscopic shell, that "whatsoever good thing" falls from human heart, or lip, or hand, falls on the sympathetic breast of the great Father of all goodness, and rises, like Antæus, with redoubled strength. Yet, unlike Antæus, it is strangled by no Hercules, but lives with an undying power to bless.

But, what is a "good thing?" Service done "as to the Lord, and not to men," not done *to* the Lord, but "as to the Lord," ordinary acts of service, in our daily occupations, done as if we did them, nor for the men we serve, but for the Lord Christ himself.

To abstain from vice, and to be useful, from "natural" or constitutional indisposition to the opposite, is not a bad thing, but, it is not religion. To act from prudent regard for consequences to wealth, or family, or reputation, is commendable; but it is not religion. When, however, a sense of duty to God enters into a man's motives he passes from morality to religion. His is not the most matured experience of religious life; Christianity offers to him one much more glorious; but he is a religious man, and the "good thing" which receives God's blessing is his.

2. *It is not confined to particular classes of men.*

We classify all things. Memory needs that thoughts

and things be grouped and labelled. The laws of mind and matter are learned from classifications. But our grouping needs frequent revision, lest we fall into ridiculous and dangerous errors. The mind must ever be open to the reception of new facts. These facts often alter our previous classifications, overturn long-cherished theories, and demolish definitions once regarded as infallible. How often has the world's fate hung upon a definition ! Where the term "The Church" conveys the idea of an organization, the limits of which are cognizable by the observation of men, how arbitrary are the classifications thence resulting ! Where "Faith" conveys only the idea of a code of doctrines and belief in them, how few can be classified as believers ! Yet men have based their classifications of their fellows on such narrow definitions as these, and have robbed life of its cheerfulness, driving the conscientious into fanaticism and turning the zealous into persecutors, till hearts have ached and the world has been red with the blood of martyrs. They have closed their ears to the warbling of birds and the hum of playful insects. They have heard no cheerful sounds in the summer breeze, and have not seen the smiles that play upon the rose-bud, the leafy hill and the waving grain. Nought have they heard but the wails of ruined mortals, and little have they seen but the steady march of millions to the pit. Life has its shadows, it is true ; but life is not all shadow. "Whatsoever good thing *any man* doeth." Thank God for the words ! Let the imprisoned spirits of the past ages hear them, and come forth to liberty ! Let light youth and hoary years hear them, and take courage ! Let the ignorant of our crowded cities hear them, and know that God is love ! Let the most despised sects hear

them, and learn that if man cast them out, the Lord forgets not their stumbling efforts to serve Him ! Let the weak and trembling know that "any man" may have Heaven's blessing if he acts "as to the Lord, and not to men."

II. THE BEARING OF THIS TRUTH ON OUR ORDINARY LIFE.

1. *It would infuse a religious spirit into the world's work.* The world wants not so much what are called "religious" orders and work as secular work done in a religious spirit, not so much *churchliness* as Christlikeness. Books on pious experience, men devoted to purely church work, times spent in prayer and public assemblies for hearing the word, all are necessary ; but the conversion of the world needs a piety that can live on in heavenly purity where there are no pious books and public prayers. It needs a goodness that remembers the Lord Christ on the deck of the lake or ocean steamer, in the foreign port and on the railway train. It needs a piety whose counting-house may be a church and whose ledger may be a liturgy.

Let men feel that their daily life may be religious, that their shops and factories may be churches and oratories, and it may be that honesty will take the place of fraud, frankness the place of duplicity, and a universal respect for God the place of widespread impurity and selfishness.

2. *It would encourage life's weary toilers.* Disgrace is unintentionally being cast on toil, both by Romanist and Protestant. The Romanist, by his *fêtes d'obligation*, spreads the idea that work and piety are somewhat irreconcilable ; the Protestant, by his, or rather *her*, ideas of respectability, casts disgrace upon work. Daughters of artisans and fishermen ape the idleness of an imaginary aristocracy, and sap the foundations of our morals and our

life. Let them know that heaven lies at the end of the pathway of work, and the longings of the heart for the home beyond will reconcile them to the needful toil, civilization will not degenerate into corruption, men will not be driven to dishonesty to maintain women in idleness, and youth will not find celibate vice more attractive than wedded virtue.

We sometimes sing, when persons crowd our communion rails, seeking for God's forgiveness, "There are angels hovering round," but are the angels there only? While the young storeman takes down his rolls of cloth, his boxes of lace, his ribands and spools, displays them to fastidious customers, smiles when his heart cannot smile, and puts the rejected goods away, smiling again upon the heartless woman who has wearied him for nought, but does it all because the Lord requires it as his daily sacrifice—are there no angels there? Is there no message of duty done for God carried upward to the skies? Is there no note in heaven's memorandum-book of holy deeds to be rewarded? When the weary woman in her kitchen toils amid odours, not of Edom, and hardens the hands that would be soft but cannot, and does all because the Lord has made it her part of life, do no angels hover there? Oh! you of velvet palm and lily brow, little do you know how much of glory lies, germ-like, in such self-sacrificing toil. "With good-will" are these doing their service as to the Lord, and the day of their redemption draweth nigh!

3. *It would elevate our piety.* I take no gloomy view of the world's piety. I quarrel not with its emotionalism and its creeds. Its piety is grand and growing. Its piety is the grandest of all the ages. But it needs a larger cha

rity. It has not the width of the heart of God about it. It is learning to love, but it has not yet forgotten to hate. It trembles at the sweet music of Divine compassion, lest, perchance, the notes should be too loving for its narrow sympathies. It confesses that all goodness comes from the Omnipresent Spirit through the Almighty Son ; but it looks upon the goodness with timid eyes unless that goodness is clothed in its ecclesiasticism. It acknowledges that the gift of spiritual life has been given to all ; but it cannot fully recognise that life as spiritual when the intellectual has not had a corresponding development.

When the dew is forming on the grass, there is no blade too small to carry its little bead of beauty ; and far must it be from atmospheric influences, if it sparkle not gloriously when the sun arises. The human blades of grass that cover the earth are often deformed, and twisted, and crowded out of shape ; and many of them hide themselves where neither the sun nor the air of heaven can ever reach them ; but, amongst the millions that drink the sweet influences of God, it is not the field in which he grows, nor the shape he may have taken, that will prevent any one from wearing a sparkling crown when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings.





THE MISSION OF JESUS

SERMON XVI.

By REV. LEROY HOOKER.

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”—JOHN x. 10.



WHEN our Lord and Saviour proposed to His disciples the question, “What think ye of Christ?” He proposed a question of deeper meaning than will appear to the careless student of Holy Writ.

The testimony of history goes to show that the temporal prosperity of nations is due, not so much to any circumstance of race, soil, climate or commercial situation as it is to what the great heart of the nation thinks and feels concerning Christ. Take two examples with which every one is familiar.

When God, in rewarding the faith of Abraham, made choice of the country to be given to his seed He chose the land of Canaan; a goodly land, flowing with milk and honey. In due time He planted them in that garden of the world, and, save when their disobedience provoked the

rod, cherished them with His choicest blessings. What fulness of strength, what heights of glory were possible to that favoured people may be seen by viewing their state in the palmy days of David and Solomon. Rich, contented and happy at home, respected, and even beloved abroad, the sweet prophetic vision of the great lawgiver was fulfilled, 'Happy art thou, O Israel ; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, the sword of thy excellency !' In the fulness of time Christ "came to His own"—came with words and deeds proper to the Son of God—came with miracles in the one hand and mercy in the other ; but "His own received Him not." *They thought Him an impostor*, or professed so to think, and rejected Him with disdain. It is easy to see that in rejecting Him they rejected their national life. Ever since that unhappy day they have wandered, exiles and aliens, in many foreign lands—a scorn and a hissing to some, a grief and a warning to most of their fellow-men. And the glory which adorned them while they were true to God, which they doubtless would have kept, had they accepted the new dispensation, has for eighteen hundred years rested in some part of the Gentile world, and, in that part where the Christ of God has been most honoured. For our second example, and one which presents a happy contrast, we turn with glad and grateful hearts to the past and present of our honoured and beloved mother land. England, though not faultless, has, more than any other nation, imbibed the spirit of Christianity, and been true to its interests—in fact *has accepted Christ as the Son of God* ; and 'on that foundation has built, sometimes, indeed, straw and stubble, but more often her gold, silver and precious stones. And who cannot see that the gates of

prosperity and power have been opened to her by the hand of God. During the last thousand years she has looked forth upon nations rising and falling like the waves of a troubled sea ; but has herself abode in strength in her little island home, and has sent forth her branches into the whole earth.

It is by no means difficult to see the connection between national piety and national prosperity. Christianity exerts an ennobling influence on individual character, and so makes every man who embraces it a treasure to the nation—a salt which resists the natural tendency towards corruption and decay. And, when it prevails to any considerable degree in a nation, it secures the special covenant blessing of the Most High upon the national industries, councils and battles, if battles there must be. “Them that honour me I will honour,” saith the Lord.

Raising our thoughts from the temporal welfare of men to their spiritual interests and eternal destinies, we find that Christ is still at the very foundation. He is “the good physician” of the soul. He has the “light of life.” He is the “true God and eternal life.” Beside Him there is no Saviour. Christ Jesus, *and Him crucified*, is “first and midst and last” in all that is most dear to men.

The foregoing thoughts will not be lost if they help us to see and feel that the mission of Jesus to mankind is a subject above all others in importance ; that it has the strongest of claims upon the attention, sympathy and co-operation of every living man. Very ignorant or desperately wicked must be the child of Adam who professes that Christ and His mission on earth are, to him, matters of indifference.

And if we are concerned with the whole subject, how

much more with that particular part which relates to the gracious effects which Christ wishes to produce upon individual life, in order that, like Paul, we may "apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ," and enter with hearty good will into His purposes. Perhaps in no passage in the whole Bible are these purposes more clearly stated than in the one now before us : "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." In this most precious announcement we have two principal parts to consider.

I. HE CAME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE.

It will help us to determine the exact meaning of these words if we, first of all, drop some constructions which seem at first correct ; but which, after closer test, are found to fall short of the full value of the statement made.

For instance : there can be no reference here to Christ as the Creator of man's life. True, all things were made by Him ; but it was not necessary to the work of creation that He should "come" in the flesh, neither was that work of creation in any way connected with or dependant upon His coming. It was in the beginning that He, as the Word which was with God and which was God, made all things. It was after that great work was finished, and long after, that He was made flesh and dwelt among us.

And again, I can see no sufficient reason for saying that this part of the text refers to the work of quickening dead souls into spiritual life. Christ is undoubtedly the author of that quickening ; but that subject is so manifestly included in the other clause of the verse that I am forced to seek some other construction to put on this. It is scarcely to be supposed that the Great Teacher had no higher purpose in using this remarkable form of words

than to repeat in the second clause, for the sake of giving it emphasis, a doctrine which he had stated in the first. Nor will the language bear such a construction. It requires that *the thing itself*, life, shall be secured to His people by the "coming" of Christ ; and that by the same means it shall, afterwards, be developed to its abundance.

If we drop these expositions, and they certainly fail to fathom the depth of the language, what did Jesus mean when He said, "I am come that they might have life." We are shut up to one conclusion. His "coming," in the office and work of Mediator, was a necessary condition to the propagation of the human race. In other words, if God had not resolved to provide a Redeemer for fallen man the race would not, nay, could not have been perpetuated. Let me here speak a little, and with much modesty, of certain great matters upon which God Himself has spoken but sparingly—the creation, the first law, the sin, and the ruin of human kind. In the beginning God created man in His own image—in righteousness and true holiness. He gave him a law, not of many precepts, to define sin, for as yet man had no sin to define ; but of a single precept to serve as a limit to self-will, an assertion of the Divine prerogative, a test of loyalty to the Creator-Sovereign. The penalty of disobedience is death in all its forms—spiritual, physical and eternal death. That physical death was included in the penalty is manifest in the very words of the doom which followed the transgression : "Unto dust shalt thou return." That law, so simple in its nature, so mild in its demands, was disobeyed. God's prerogative was denied. The high treason was committed Self-will was exalted. God's will was dishonoured. Spiritual death followed as a natural and necessary conse-

quence ; for the disobedience rendered man's nature contrary to the nature of God. Purity and Peace, twin sisters, fled back to the bosom of God. The next event and, therefore, the last event in the earthly history of man would, naturally, have been the finishing stroke of the penalty—the death of the body and the setting of the broad seal of eternity upon the pollution and perdition of the offenders.

But this procedure seems to have been unwelcome to the Judge. All His reasons we may not undertake to state ; but some of them lie in plain sight. Two deathless spirits—the work of His own hands—with all their high capabilities for holiness, and heaven, and God, must waste in endless moral ruin, must wail in outer darkness forever, if the blow is permitted to fall. And then, was the enemy to be permitted to boast that he had made a helpless, hopeless failure of God's grandest earthly work? that he had driven holiness from the world? that he had successfully balked whatever purposes God had in view in creating man? Nay! The All-Merciful could not lightly abandon His own work to such a ruin. The Almighty was not yet overthrown, nor His plans confounded. All the Father and all the Majesty in Jehovah counselled an interference. He would gird Himself like a man of war and go forth unto this battle. He would snatch the prey already captured from the very jaws of the devourer ; and He would destroy the evil work which the devil had wrought upon mankind, and continue the race that it should multiply on the earth. But how could He do this and remain true? for He had said, “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” And how, consistently with His justice? for sin existed and cried aloud for its just recompense of reward. And how,

consistently with His goodness? for to perpetuate a race of fallen and hopeless beings would be to perpetuate sin and misery, and multiply them as fast as He would permit such a race to multiply. Without a doubt, had it been possible to do no otherwise than to leave humanity under the undisputed empire of sin, the truth, the justice and the goodness of God alike, would have demanded the immediate execution of the penalty. The suppression of the race would have been involved as a necessary consequence, and the annals of mankind would then have been limited to the creation, the short-lived purity and happiness, the fall, the death and eternal perdition of Adam and Eve.

Strong as were these reasons for cutting off, at its fountain, the stream of humanity, they were all removed by the salvation provided in Christ. The seed of the woman was appointed to bruise the serpent's head and break the empire of sin. The Divine Majesty itself fixed and furnished a ransom of sufficient value to magnify and make honourable the law although its penalty should, in every vital respect, be suspended while the overtures of mercy were being made, and entirely removed from every penitent believer in Jesus. And the goodness, as well as the majesty of God, was well pleased that the race should multiply since its help was laid upon One who was "mighty to save." But had no such redemption been possible, or, being possible, had it been withheld, the penalty would have fallen upon the first transgressors in the day that they transgressed. In the light of these truths we are at no loss to see what Christ meant to teach when He said, "I am come that they might have life." *We owe our existence to His redeeming work.*

II. HE CAME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY.

By the life more abundant I understand a life developed to its utmost capability, and thence derive the doctrine that it is Christ's purpose to develop to perfectness the life He has been the means of securing to us. Here two questions arise, the answers to which will sufficiently exhaust this part of the subject.

First. By what means does Christ reach and influence our life? A few words will be enough upon a subject with which every Bible reader is familiar. In His Word, of doctrine, and precept, and promise, we are instructed what to believe, to hope for, and to do. In the life of the "man Christ Jesus," we are shown a perfect model for our lives. Our infirmities of mind and heart are helped by the Holy Ghost, whom he sends from the Father. But principally we are affected by the atonement for our sins, made by His death. Without this, the most powerful appeal to our hearts would have been lacking—repentance would have been unavailing—the grace of conversion would have been impossible, and our life, here and hereafter, would have been an experience of uninterrupted sin and misery.

Second. To what extent does Christ affect our life? The beneficent hand of Christianity touches our life in every department and develops it to abundance.

It promotes the healthy and prolonged existence of the body. What are the conditions of health and length of days? Manifestly that a man should be temperate, contented, industrious, free from hereditary disease, and safe from violence. These being the conditions of an abundant physical life no one can fail to see that Christianity is cal-

culated to give it, for it supplies all the conditions. The disciple of Jesus can be neither a glutton nor a drunkard, nor indeed a voluptuary in any sense ; but, on the contrary, must be temperate in all things. More than any other type of man he is also free from those anxieties which fret the mind to the hurt of the body. As for his *best* things, his treasure and his home, they lie beyond the reach of earthly commotion and peril, in the "city that hath foundations." And what of care for temporal things would otherwise fall with crushing weight upon his mind, he is permitted to cast upon God ; and is assured that, even to his daily bread, God careth for him. At the same time idleness is not permitted to enfeeble his physical powers. He must work with his own hands, and provide for all properly dependent upon him, or be counted worse than an infidel. This tendency of the Christian religion to husband human life would scarcely ever be defeated by hereditary diseases, had the progenitors, near and remote, been practical Christians. It is now known that most of that class of diseases are the offspring of sinful indulgences which the precepts of Christ, had they been obeyed, would have prevented. Nor would the life of a Christian man ever be cut short of its natural period by the hand of violence, if all other men were Christians. There would then be no one in all the world to slay him. In short, if all mankind would embrace and practise the religion of Christ, it would do more than all the medicines and laws in the world to give health and long life to our physical nature. We should then, as a rule, die of old age.

It develops to its highest capability the human intellect. If no explanation of the manner could be given, the fact would still remain indisputable. In judging of a general

principle like this we must not compare individuals, in whom essential difference of circumstances might defeat the object of the comparison, but masses, in each of which there will be found a sufficient number in equal circumstances to afford ground for a correct estimate of the forces which have made them to differ. Take, then, those nations in which Christianity exists in its purest form—say the English and American, and compare them with the masses of the heathen world. Is it not beyond dispute that in all matters requiring the use of intellect—in agriculture, mechanical and fine arts, commerce and science—the advantage is, to an almost unlimited extent, with the people who have been developed under the influences of the Christian religion. And let it be remembered, just here, that the theories of art and nature, which have given to Christian nations such pre-eminence, were not, like their religion, a revelation of matters otherwise beyond their reach ; but were gradually evolved from the innate resources of the human mind itself. And let due weight be allowed for the fact that in every case where the Gospel of Jesus has been given to a debased heathen nation, and has taken any strong hold on the national mind—as in the case of New Zealand, the Sandwich and Friendly Islands, and Madagascar, there has been a mighty quickening of intellect, and a rapid progress towards the excellencies of nations older in Christianity. From these premises the conclusion is unavoidable that the religion of Christ is calculated to stimulate the human intellect to its noblest efforts—to push it forward to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. It is confessedly easier to see the fact than to explain the manner ; yet even here one may venture to speak a little.

Christian *benevolence* demands that intellect shall bend itself to the task of wresting from art and nature the best means of relieving the sufferings of mankind. Christian *piety* invites the aid of intellect, that she may the better understand and admire the wisdom and glory of God, as manifested in the works of nature. Christian *zeal* makes intellect her right hand in all “works of faith and labours of love.” Christian *wisdom*, in making up her treasure for eternity, knows that she is limited to two things—character and knowledge ; and assures her disciple that what he is and what he knows is all he can take with him when he goes hence.

But Christianity does much more than stimulate. No one can estimate the debt we owe the sacred scriptures for the revelation of the unity of God, and, therefore, the unity of design and law throughout the universe. The heathen student of nature referred each department of his subject to a separate creator ; and these he believed to be, not only independent of each other, but often antagonistic. How different the aspect nature presents to the Christian student ! One Being, infinite in skill and power, produced the whole—from the grain of sand to the grandest orb of heaven, from the insect to the archangel. The rudiments, when once attained, apply all round the universe, and unlock a thousand things in nature which were inscrutable to the man of many gods. Most of all, the expansion of the human intellect is due to its frequent contemplations of the exalted character of God, as He is revealed to us in the Bible. There are few who have not listened to the charms of music, or surrendered themselves to the inspirations of poetry, or stood entranced by a magnificent landscape, or dwelt in wrapt ad-

miration upon some rare instance of human goodness and greatness, until the soul expanded quite beyond its former bounds, and conceived for itself never-to-be-forgotten truth and beauty and goodness. What, then, must the effect be of daily and adoring contemplation of Him who is the perfection of goodness and glory, of truth and majesty?

In such exercises the tendency of the intellect is evermore upward to the heights beyond—heights which rise in succession to the adoring gaze of the beholder and, though towering far beyond the reach of his finite vision, enrich him with truth, and expand his mind to its utmost capacity.

Furnishing such motives, removing some serious hindrances to the successful pursuit of knowledge, and introducing a subject so well calculated to enlarge the scope of mental action as the existence, character, and perfections of an infinite Creator and Governor of the universe, it is not so difficult after all to see how it is that Christianity promotes, to abundance, our intellectual life.

It is the source of our spiritual life. The highest use of our faculties is to employ them in knowing, loving and serving God, our Maker and Benefactor. But alas for us! in this respect we are by nature dead. So far as this, the highest use of our faculties is concerned, we might as well have no understanding—no heart, no powers, for we withhold them from God. Like the body of Lazarus our faculties are, in the sight of our Lord, dead and corrupted. And there we all lie, dead in trespasses and sins—estranged from God and at enmity with His law—until the voice which quickened Lazarus cries at the door of our moral sepulchre: “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the

dead." Here Christ is the Alpha and Omega. If repentance and remission of sins are preached to us, it is because Christ hath suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. If we have truth that makes us free, it is the truth as it is in Jesus. If we have the work and witness of the Holy Ghost in our souls, it is by our Lord Jesus that He is sent from the Father. If we love Him, it is because He first loved us, and gave Himself for us. The degree of abundance to which Christ is able to develop our spiritual life may be seen partially in the attainments of well-advanced Christians, and perfectly in the too often unexhausted promises of the gospel.

First of all, a divinely-wrought conviction of sin in himself, and of mercy in God, moves the sinner to repentance. Turning to God and seeking mercy, his sins, though many and great, are all forgiven—and so forgiven that they shall nevermore be mentioned to him if he turn not again unto folly. With the pardon comes the witness of the Holy Spirit with his spirit that he is a child of God, and a radical change in the tendencies of his nature. Before, his heart was a rich, capable soil, whose resources were prostituted to the bringing forth of useless and noxious weeds; now, it is regenerated, and the seed of God remaineth in it as the germ of holiness. By that germ the forces of his being are thenceforth to be taken up and assimilated; and from it shall spring up holiness to the Lord—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Then, and not till then, the soul experiences the ecstasies of living. It has passed from death unto life—it has entered upon the high calling for which it was created—*it has come home to God*. "Unto the uttermost," that our capacities for the knowledge and

love of God will allow, is the measure of the abundance to which Christ desires to increase our spiritual life.

It develops our three-fold life to a still richer abundance IN HEAVEN. It is a part of Christianity to go to heaven—and if you look upon a man who from “youth to hoary age” has been growing and ripening under its influence, and is now ready to depart, you see one with whom Christ has only begun—the real abundance of his life is yet to come. The body, which was preserved to a green old age by the favouring influences of the Christian religion, shall, in the resurrection, be made altogether immortal. Labour shall no more cause weariness and waste. Hunger and thirst, disease and decay, shall no more prey upon it; for, like unto Christ’s glorious body, it will possess immortal youth and vigour and beauty. The mind, which was stimulated and helped in its upward progress on earth, will then be placed in still happier circumstances. With a perception and memory unimpaired by physical infirmities, in the society of the elder sons of God who were present and shouted for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid, and, best of all, in full communication with God Himself through the medium of Christ’s humanity, one day will be better than a thousand, in even our most renowned seats of learning. And there will, of necessity, be an abundant increase of spiritual life. If to live spiritually is to consecrate all our powers to the living service of God, then the Christian must live a higher life in heaven than he did on earth. He will have more to give and less difficulty in giving it, and will there understand, as he never did before, the glorious majesty and the loving kindness of the Lord, and will there appreciate, as he never could on earth, all he has escaped and all he

has gained through the sacrifice of the Son of God. He will there realize, as he never did before, his indebtedness to the Holy Ghost, who, in the life below, was his guide and comforter and sanctifier. And as he presents his glorified body and soul at the foot of the throne as a living and eternal sacrifice to God, he will be able to sing with a depth of meaning before unknown :—

“ Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small ;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all.”

There remains one more thought to add. If we can grasp the “FOREVER” of that life in heaven, we shall then be able to measure its abundance. Here we fail utterly, but we will not complain of our inability. The treasure we cannot count, the inheritance we cannot measure, the life which exceeds in its abundance “*all that we are able to ask or to think*” is our own. And let us never forget how we came by it. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The practical lessons which flow from this subject are of the first importance to the world.

1. *It teaches the philanthropist the best way to reduce the sufferings of men.* Help to Christianize them, and, as far as you succeed, you will prevent most of the hunger, nakedness and disease, both of mind and body, by which they are afflicted. If it is a charity to relieve these, it is a thousand charities to prevent them ; and that not only to the first individuals so benefited, but to their progeny, to the latest generations. Dig out the roots of evil and

you will save yourself the annual labour of lopping off the branches.

2. It teaches the *patriot* how to promote the highest good of his nation. Plant in its very heart "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and the result will be—as it ever has been—physical, intellectual and moral excellence—the most essential conditions of national prosperity. And to these will certainly be added the blessing of God, which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow.

3. It teaches the *pastor* his duty to the flock. In the first part of this chapter Christ speaks of Himself as the great chief shepherd. He says, "I am the good shepherd, I lay down my life for the sheep that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He also speaks of other kinds of shepherds. Some come un-sent, on purpose to prey upon the flock, to kill and to destroy. Others come to work for wages—mere hirelings, having no love for the flock. In any time of danger to their comfort, their income or their lives, they will desert, and leave the sheep to the mercies of the devouring wolf. Brother, permit me to lay myself at your feet and entreat you to copy the spirit and example of the Good Shepherd. Our true reward is not represented in personal comfort nor in long life. If faithful in our work we shall, at the very least, have the Master's "well done"—if successful in it we shall have souls, redeemed and glorified souls, for our hire. *Failing of these we lose our wages.* Granted that our work is severe ; that our income is, in some cases, scanty ; that our itinerancy presses hard upon some of the tenderest sensibilities of our nature ; what are all these things compared with the fact that our branch of the flock of Christ flourishes. Our people, as a rule, live well

and die well, and they are our joy and our crown. We are labourers together with Christ to promote in them the abundance of life, and with Him shall we share the great reward when they are presented, without spot, unto God. We shall do well then to remember that, in this case, the shepherd exists for the flock and not the flock for the shepherd.

4. It teaches the *flock* their great indebtedness to the Chief Shepherd. Your existence, your salvation from sin, your fulness of love, joy, and peace, your victory over death, and your assurance of the far more exceeding and eternal fulness of life in the world to come—these are the items whose sum will express the measure of your obligation to Christ. O see that you live *unto Him*. Let it not be your old, sinful self, but Christ, that liveth in you. And let me here say a word to you concerning your obligations to the under shepherds; for we also, in a subordinate sense, are come to minister to you the abundance of life. While you give your best love where it belongs—to Jesus, don't forget that you owe something to the men who, under His leadership, are labouring for your salvation. And don't think that it is merely a money obligation. There are some things connected with our work to which money has no relation. It has no relation to the higher benefits you derive from our ministry—nor to the burden of souls—nor to the periodical severing of our dearest friendships—nor to the pain of leaving the graves of our wives and children to be kept green by the hand of the stranger. Brethren, we have a claim upon you for something more than food and raiment. Give us the comfort of knowing that we are highly “esteemed in love for our work's sake.” In all that we are called to suffer give us

your brotherly sympathies. And, "brethren, pray for us" that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.

5. It teaches the *impenitent sinner* how ungrateful and ruinous a thing it is to reject Christ. Already He has given you life, yet you flee from Him as though He were a messenger of death. He pursues you through all downward paths in which you are seeking death, and every day cries in your ears, "turn ! turn ! for why will you die ?" With loving force He tries to press into your diseased and famished soul the balm of Gilead and the bread of life, but you shut and bolt the door. O my brethren, what will you do by and by ? Before you lie the valley and shadow of death, the swellings of Jordan, and the judgment seat of Christ. "O seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near." Lay hold on eternal life while it is yet in your reach. And make haste, for your life is but a vapour, and will soon be gone. Open now the door, and Christ will come in and sup with you, and you shall sup with Him ; and that feast shall nourish you unto life eternal.





GLORYING IN RELIGION.

SERMON XVII.

By REV. E. A. STAFFORD, MONTREAL.

“ Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches : But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth : for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”—JEREMIAH ix., 23, 24.



WE see here the relative importance of the things which occupy the largest place in the thoughts of men.

Wisdom, power and riches receive men's chief attention in life ; but they are all secondary to true religion. They may lawfully be sought after with moderation ; they may be possessed and enjoyed ; but not gloried in. The religion which consists in the true knowledge of God is alone worthy of man's glorying. The study of this text reveals religion placed in this grand preëminence.

I. LET US STUDY THE CHARACTER AND VALUE OF THE FOUR THINGS PLACED BEFORE US IN CONTRAST.

II. LET US ILLUSTRATE THE IDEA OF GLORVING, AND SEE HOW RELIGION ALONE IS WORTHY OF THAT DISTINCTION.

1. *Wisdom is brought before us.* This is a high endowment, a copy of an attribute in the Divine nature by the direction of which the worlds were formed, the parts of the vast universe perfectly harmonized to each other, and the whole subjected to a most beneficent system of government. Wisdom in man has accomplished results worthy of so distinguished an endowment. Applied to science it has made discoveries exceedingly beneficial to men in every department of life ; applying itself to art it has developed mechanical inventions by which the exhaustive manual labour, which was before a tax upon every useful industry, has been mostly removed. In serving the convenience of the world it has brought space within its embrace, and provided for the dissemination of thought to the ends of the earth. The observatory of the astronomer, through whose telescope we read the wonders of the universe ; the laboratory of the chemist, in whose crucible we see dissolved the mysteries of created matter ; the magic of the telegraph, by whose voice we converse with those on the other side of the globe ; the fecundity of the press, by whose agency thought and knowledge become omnipresent, each stands as a monument proclaiming the marvels accomplished by man's wisdom. This, then, is not a mean endowment. No disparaging word may be spoken of it ; but, on the contrary, it is to be honoured, exalted !

2. *Power.* "Let not the mighty." The idea is, the influence which an individual may acquire and exert upon the rest of the world. We realize the thought best in looking upon it embodied. Set before the mind such an one as

Julius Cæsar, Alexander, Bonaparte, each in his own time the conqueror of the world. There he stands in his unapproachable preëminence. He lifts no hand, speaks no word, yet the world trembles at the mention of his name, and if he step, his leaden footfall thrills the nations with horror, for it is the moving of a power greater than nations ! Here is physical power.

But there is the power of an idea, a thought or truth, embodied and walking abroad in the earth. Such was Newton's power, and such, but in a still higher form, was Martin Luther's. The world was moved by the theory of gravitation, and trembled under Luther's preaching of the doctrine of Justification by Faith, as much as ever it did before conqueror's sword !

Look upon the throne of the Brunswicks, standing amid the shock of nations, the falling of thrones, and the convulsion of the world, as a monument of physical, martial, political power !

Look upon the Protestant Christian pulpit, founded mainly by Martin Luther, as the human instrumentality, which stands even more securely than the throne of the Brunswicks, and carries its influence where the tread of a soldier cannot come, and the influence of an army can never reach, which sways a world the sword cannot subdue—the great world of mind, of heart, feeling and affection—see in this a monument of intellectual, spiritual power !

Neither, then, is power a mean thing, to be spoken of lightly, or in terms of disparagement. It is altogether grand, worthy of our admiration and honour !

3. *Riches.* Of these nothing need be said. The word brings before our minds vast estates, treasures of gold and

silver, splendid equipage. The possession of riches does not necessarily clothe the possessor with baseness any more than the possession of power or wisdom does. The verdict of the wisest and best men is that riches are desirable, and not by any means to be despised when honestly gained and wisely employed. They are a good possession.

Now these are the things which the Bible compares with true religion, and over which it is exalted. If drunkenness, fraud, tyranny, or any of the things which are felt to be injurious to the human race had been taken, and religion had been said to be better than these, every one must have assented. But it does more for religion than that. It takes the noblest and best things, those which, of all this world offers, men with justice value most highly; and it claims for religion a higher acknowledgement from men, than for these.

4. *Religion.* The word does not occur in the text, but what it means does. The true knowledge of God in its proper application is religion, and this is brought before us in the text.

The knowledge of God spoken of in the text is peculiar. There is something more in it than we ordinarily associate with the idea of knowing—"That He understandeth and knoweth me." It is not an accident that both these words are used, but that a view of the subject may be presented which would otherwise escape our attention. What is read or studied in books is known. But above that power of the mind which receives knowledge through the medium of words, there is a subtle power of the understanding by which we know things without knowing how we know them. We have an impression so strong we

act upon it without having been conscious of receiving it through any form of words. By this power of intuition we read characters, penetrate a false garb that was worn to deceive us, or strangely understand a man's designs and govern ourselves accordingly without his having spoken a word.

Now what this power does for men in the affairs of the world, faith does for him in understanding the character of God. So that to "understand and know" God means something more than to learn what we can of Him from books. Much may be known of God by the study of works in theology, by listening to sermons and lectures, by close application to the Bible. Thus may we know of His existence in Trinity, of His omnipotence, omnipresence and all His attributes ; but all this knowledge has been derived through certain forms of words. It is known just as a schoolboy knows his grammar, or mathematics or natural science. There is no understanding of God by the intuition of faith, by a mysterious experience of His presence in the heart. As a consequence, all that knowledge does not make any person good ; it has no more effect upon a person than the same amount of knowledge in some other department. To "understand and know" God requires something more. The eye that reads must have the light of faith, then is the impression not made in forms of words upon the tablets of memory, but in deep experience upon the heart. St. Augustine once met a heathen Gentile, who, pointing to his idols—various objects carved and shapen in wood or stone—said : "These are my gods, where are yours?" He then pointed to the sun and said the same, then to certain beasts which were commonly worshipped among the Gentiles, and said the same, Said

St. Augustine, "I did not point him to my God, not because I had none, but because he had no eye to see Him." The eye that sees must have the light of faith, without which God cannot be "understood and known."

Then this understanding of God has some limitation, that is, it must recognise Him in a particular character. He must be understood as exercising "loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth." *Loving-kindness* presents the gracious side of His character. Love is a very precious word, it is full of tenderness. And the word kindness is very suggestive of sympathy. Yet neither fully expresses the warmth of feeling with which man is regarded by His Divine Creator, we therefore have the two united to bring to our minds a full sense of the yearning love and compassion with which we are regarded by God. *Judgment.* This word turns our thoughts to the terrible side of the Divine character. He will not forget insults offered to Him. Offenders will not go unpunished. Herod after slaying one apostle and imprisoning another, made a great speech. His flatterers said it was the voice of a god. Then he vaunted himself up. He thought soon to be worshipped as god. But heaven spake against his impious blasphemy, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. God does execute judgment, and in the end He will judge the whole earth before Him. *Righteousness.* All His dealings with man are right. Whether on the side of loving-kindness or judgment, He never swerves in the slightest degree from the strictest line of right, and in the end every one will receive what is justly and righteously his due. In this character He delights to manifest Himself among men in the earth.

Those whose hearts have no experience of God, who do

not have the benefit of faith to aid their understanding of Him, fail here. In endeavouring to temper Divine justice with mercy, to blend love and judgment in the same character, they perpetrate constant mistakes, though they have all the knowledge of God that books can convey. Said a person, who had for years been perplexing himself with the character of God, as with a problem in mathematics, addressing me, "your God is a blood-thirsty tyrant, a monster of evil." When asked his reason for such high blasphemy, I found he had been reading in the Old Testament, and had dwelt upon the accounts, in the book of Joshua, of the terrible slaughter of the Canaanites by the Israelites, in obedience to the command of the Lord. "Why," said he, "if a man should show himself possessed of so insatiable a thirst for blood, he would be driven from society as a monster unfit to live. Yet such is your God." Though it may not in many cases develop into such rank blasphemy, yet errors like this are by no means uncommon. Without faith men cannot receive the thought that God's purposes are of infinitely greater value than human life, and so they only know Him as a God of vengeance, but do not understand Him as exercising loving-kindness. But religious faith, bringing to the heart a lively experience of the more gracious side of the Divine character, can, even in the darkest dispensations of His providence, understand Him as exercising "loving-kindness" as well as "judgment."

When a boy, a few times I heard men in my father's employment complain that he was a hard master. But I knew better than that. I knew he was an energetic man, urging his business by his own hands, paying his men well, and using them well ; but was not willing when there

was work to be done, and they were paid for doing it, that they should lie in the shade. These men knew this much as well as I ; but I knew more, I understood in my experience of my father's character what my young heart assured me would give their words the lie. I had seen that father's eye flashing with joy in viewing the simple pleasures of his children. I had seen his countenance written over with anxiety when studying their welfare, and had heard from his lips words of the deepest tenderness, and I knew that he was anything but hard, but only kind and good. As I may know my earthly father better than another does, because of my nearer, more intimate intercourse with him, because I am his child, so may I know my Heavenly Father, upon whom my faith has taken hold, of whom my heart has had an experience, better than one who has not had the same spiritual communion with Him. Such a one sees the judgment, and says that He is hard. But we who understand His character, by faith, know better than that. He has looked upon Him in the raging storm, but not in the silent power of His glorious sunshine ; he has seen Him in the dark form of the raging hurricane, sweeping in its path of desolation over the earth ; but not in the calm, placid beauty of the sunlit waters. There have been rugged forms and towering peaks of the awful mountain in his view ; but not grassy glens and luxuriant flower gardens. He has seen the sword of wrath shedding the blood of impious foes ; but not His hand of mercy soothing the pains of the suffering, relieving the sick and the dying in their hours of agony. He has heard the voice of terror proclaiming "Vengeance is Mine ;" but not the voice of tenderness speaking to the humble and the contrite heart, " Be of good cheer, thy

sins are forgiven thee." He has heard the awful imprecation upon the wicked, "Depart from me ye cursed ;" but not that tender assurance spoken to the forsaken one, sad and weeping, as earthly ties are broken, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." But looking at God thus His character is only partially known. He is not understood, because He is judged from a partial manifestation. Just as a man's plans were ripe, and he thought his fortune sure, the blight came, and instead of fortune he had disappointment. In that hour of darkness his fists were clenched, his wrath was hot, and he declared that heaven was cruel thus to thwart his purposes. He was put into the furnace of affliction, his friends died, his health was impaired, and he said, "wrath, not love, counsels in heaven over the affairs of men." He had no faith and no heart experience whereby he might understand God. But one who had this experience of faith passed under the same cloud, drank the same bitter cup of reverse and disappointment, felt the same affliction, wept at the graveside of the last of his family, experienced the estrangement of his last friend, and was himself bowed in sickness to the borders of death, but in all understood the Lord as delighting in loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, and therefore dutifully praised His hand in sweetest strain of song while passing under its heaviest strokes !

Now this understanding and knowledge of God, including an experience of His in-dwelling in the heart by faith, constitutes true religion. And it is this which the text places in a position of pre-eminence over these three grand things, wisdom, power and riches. This, man may glory in.

II. LET US NOW ILLUSTRATE THE IDEA OF GLORYING,

AND SEE HOW RELIGION ALONE IS WORTHY OF THAT DISTINCTION.

What is glorying ? There are some words the meaning of which are best understood by looking upon the act which they describe. This is one. Look at some one who is glorying. Let us go to the school room. There is a boy who for weeks has been striving for a certain victory. To gain the head of his class has been his consuming ambition. At last he has reached that towering eminence. There he stands. His eye flashes with brighter lustre than ever before. His little parted lips can command no words to express the exultation of that transcendent moment ! Is he ashamed of what he has done ? Would he object to his parents being told of the achievement ? No ; you may go into the street and tell every person you meet, you may put it into the newspapers, you may climb to the highest eminence, and from its height proclaim in the hearing of all the world the achievements of this little conqueror, and you will only add fuel to the consuming joy of his young heart. He has done a fine thing, and would be proud to have all the world know it. *He glories in it.* Take that same set of feelings, transfer them to the bosom of manhood, and it is human glorying. It is Napoleon, referring his patent of nobility to the battle of Montenotte, where he gained his first victory over the Austrians ; it is Franklin, who has just snatched lightning from the cloud ; it is Cyrus W. Field, after the first message has sped through the waters of the Atlantic, and America has heard the gentle whisper ; aye, it is Stephen, in martyr's blood, knocking at the gates and asking a martyr's crown ! Is he ashamed of what he has done ? No. Tell it from the hill tops, let the mountains

declare it to the clouds, let the nations know it, and let coming generations hear, for he glories in the work he has accomplished!

Now is wisdom worthy of exciting such feelings of exultation in the heart of man? "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom." Sometimes those who are esteemed, learned and wise do exalt themselves thus, but they show thereby that they have yet to gain the element of true wisdom. Ask Solomon "shall man glory in wisdom?" He knew its worth. He said, "I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her before sceptres and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither compared I unto her any precious stone, because all gold in respect of her is as sand, and silver shall be counted as clay to her. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light." He had paid high tribute to wisdom, yet so far from glorying in it he exclaimed, "vanity of vanities, saith the preacher all is vanity."

Is might or power worthy of exciting such exultation of feeling? "Let not the mighty man glory in his might." Ask Bonaparte. One would suppose he knew. We seem to hear a negative answer in his oft expressed lament, even at St. Helena, concerning the check he received at Acre from Sir Sydney Smith: "That man made me miss my destiny." Ask Alexander. He responds: "I swept over the east with my victorious army, the nations bowed, and kings came forth uncrowned as I passed. I knocked at the gates of Babylon—they opened and I entered; but just as I rose to that lofty eminence of power, and stood the proud conqueror of the world, the poison of death flashed through my veins, my might was less than a babe's, and I crumbled into dust."

Nor shall riches awaken such exalted feelings : " Let not the rich man glory in his riches." The spectacle of a man glorying in riches is not uncommon, when perhaps the only able thing he ever did was to amass a fortune, and that perhaps in such a way that the world was no better for his having made it. Or may be he inherited it, without one stroke of his own useless hand. It does not secure to him one of the qualities of the true man, yet he expects more regard than others because he is rich ! Sometimes his calf will cast him off. The books tell of such a one, when dying, that he asked an attendant to bring him a bag of gold. He took it and laid it upon his heart. But after a few moments he removed it, saying simply : " It won't do," and repeating it, " It won't do." No, certainly riches will not do in such an hour !

But true religion man may justly glory in. He who has it may feel that he has something of which he may desire the whole world to know. He may with good reason demand that men honour him more, on account of his possession. If he appeal to it when dying, like the man to his gold, it will do. If he seek to it for happiness during life, it will enrobe the most barren surroundings in garments of beauty !

In consideration of these thoughts we ask why should it be so hard to induce men to take upon them a profession of Christ's religion ? There are so many things for which men ought to blush, yet they do not, while this, the only thing in which they ought to glory is about the only thing for which they blush ! We ask young people, why should they blush for the profession of Jesus ? A time will come when it will be the only thing any one will care to

possess, when those who have had riches, power and wisdom will stand in the same vast company with Christ's confessors, the whole human family, and all the angels will witness the scene. In that solemn judgment, unless it transpire incidentally it will not be known of any that they were wise, or powerful, or rich, but the whole assembly will hear of him who understood and knew God. A Rothschild will be unmentioned for his riches, or a Bonaparte that he was a man of power, but the poorest child of the meanest beggar will be proclaimed before all the multitude, if he had made the personal acquaintance of Jesus. Why hesitate now to proclaim our religious tendencies; then it will be the only thing we will be glad to have the world know of us, and he who has Christ then, how will he exult to have the universe know of the fact! Do any desire a star for ambition? Set the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ before you, enshrine His love in your heart, and let your glorying not be in things that perish, but in Him who endures and sits enthroned forever!





THE GOSPEL VIEW OF TRIBULATION.

SERMON XVIII.

By REV. C. S. EBY, B.A., HAMILTON (GERMAN MISSIONARY).

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also : knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope : And hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”—ROMANS v. 2-5.



STRANGER coming from an open plain, where mountains are unknown, into some narrow Alpine valley, overhung with dark, dense fog, is oppressed with its quiet and grave-like stillness. He would hardly believe you if you told him that a few hundred feet up the side of those hills there was a spot where the sun still shines, where the breezes are free, and the eye sweeps unhindered o'er hill and dale. But the fog clears away and he sees that it is a real fact, for there the mountain wall rises majestic at his side, towering aloft far beyond the

range of distinguishing sight. He takes a field-glass, and objects before unseen are revealed to him. He sees a wayside inn, the cabin of a peasant, or perhaps a mountain hamlet with its stunted steeple. He sees moving forms and knows that life is there. But only when he leaves the vale and commences the ascent himself, does he begin to comprehend the real sublimity and wealth of that lofty stand. Every step which he takes upwards widens his view ; the air grows freer and seemingly purer, his blood circulates with more vigorous flow, and gives him a foretaste of joys to come. At last he reaches the spot on the mountain pass of which he had been told. At his feet lies the valley, wrapped again it may be, in the densest fog or evening shade. Around him nature's giants stand majestic, and his eye sweeps a mighty range, where peaks on peaks, rising in sublime irregularity, reflect from their snowy crests the departing sunlight of a brilliant heaven.

Here we have an illustration of human experience in religious things. There are points in the pathway of the Christian which are far beyond the range of the earth's sordid eye. Do we remain in the vale as mere worldlings without high and holy aspirations after the Divine image, then we are enveloped in a fog which shuts out from our view the most glorious privileges of a blood-bought race. If one should tell us of the comforts, and riches, and happiness of religion, it seems to us a something unreal and fantastic, something built on clouds, a mere castle in the air. But when that fog is removed so that we can see a little beyond ourselves, we are compelled to acknowledge the superior power and dignity of the true man of God. If our minds are but partially enlightened by the Spirit of God so that we begin to see into the mysteries of spiritual life,

our minds seem to open to a new world, our blindness is gradually removed, we see men as trees walking. But 'tis only when we begin the ascent for ourselves, when we leave the vale, loosen the bonds which mammon has coiled around us, and break the strong fetters welded and fastened upon us by the prince of sin, that we begin to feel the blessedness of the reality of a higher spiritual life. The earth is none the less ours, but more ours than ever it was, for we see its real beauties more than ever. The more we rise above the earth and the earthly, the wider our views become, more full of patience and charity which contemplates the earth in the light of heaven. As we rise in our upward course a new life seems to inspire our being, a mightier faith lays hold on things divine and all our aspirations centre in God.

To one of these landmarks in the Christian's pilgrimage I ask you to accompany me on this occasion. Let us leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and, in our pressing forward after perfection, stop a moment to consider a branch of Christian experience, which, wherever it exists, evinces a wondrous power of faith, a full fruition of love, showing that the soul is far on the way towards perfection's lofty height, namely—*Glorying in tribulation*.

One of the first things required of a Christian by the Gospel, and one which seems to be the most difficult to acquire, is perfect submission to the will of God, and implicit confidence in His power, and wisdom, and love, when our pathway is so dark that our own eyes cannot see and comprehend all the way through which we are being led. Wherever this confidence exists in its fulness it is ever followed by joy, let our outward circumstances be what they may, and this joy excites the wonder, if not the admiration, of the unbeliever.

The Apostle James exclaims in the very commencement of his general Epistle, an epistle written in a time of conflict and storm for the Church of God, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." To one unacquainted with the spring of the Christian's hope such an exhortation must appear an inexplicable riddle. What can be the source of this joy? what its support? As it is only found in the experience of true Christians we find here the explanation. 'Tis not a mere fancy of the apostle; it flows from the teaching of Christ Himself, a gem from the treasury of God, a fruit of the Gospel of Peace.

'Tis an easy matter to be joyous and glad when life's pathway leads us through sunny fields, by the still waters, amid fragrant flowers, where we are charmed with music's harmony—strangers to the jarring discords of earth's hot struggle. Easy it is to be happy when our house seems strong, and the whole world favourable. But has the grace of God wrought such a transformation in our hearts that we can, in the midst of tribulation and pain, rejoice in the prospect of that time when "they who sow in tears shall reap in joy?" For earth's joys are fleeting and insecure. Some fell simoom sweeps over our pleasant fields, withering the fragrant flowers and blasting the blossoms of our hope. Some deadly sirocco breathes pestilence into our midst, and burns up our life's-blood in its fountain. Some unseen hand touches our fancied palace and its beautiful frescoes become unsightly blotches, our hopes vanish into air, and the walls of our fancied strength fall crumbling to the earth.

Can a mortal's spirit rise above such ruin and desolation and still lay claim to a right to be glad? Yes, indeed, for the eye of Christian faith looks beyond, his faith grasps

the promise of another home, and his hope is the earnest of a better life. The veil of the inner sanctuary is lifted and he catches a glimpse of the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those that love Him. Deep down in the soul of the child of God there dwells a lasting peace which the storms of earth cannot reach.

But, can we bless the hand which afflicts? Can we "*glory* in tribulations" themselves, and praise God for life's afflictions as the Gospel requires? Ah! that is the difficult task. The hand seems cruel which afflicts. The medicine has still a bitter, bitter taste though we know it to be our only cure. Here we must take refuge in Jesus. When conscious of our own weakness we can look to Him who has left us a perfect example, that we should follow in His steps. He has trodden the same rough pathway. "He was afflicted in all points like as we are," but His sorrows far, far exceeded ours. He was made perfect through suffering, and is able to succour them which are tempted. We know that we have in Him a sympathizing High Priest who will be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who in the days of His suffering cried to the Father that the cup might pass from Him if it were possible. He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust, and never can He break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax. He will never despise the weary pilgrim tottering under a weight which seems too heavy for him to bear.

Man was not created for sorrow and woe. Life's crosses were unknown until sin cursed our nature. Life's thorns never grew in the bowers of Eden for the holy. They are to be found only here in this vale of tears for sinful fallen humanity. No wonder then that we long for deliverance

from the cross, no wonder that we weep under the strokes of the rod. To long for freedom is natural. We cannot but weep over life's ills. But as long as Eternal Wisdom sends them, or permits them, so long must we regard them as tokens of Eternal Love. But that requires a strength and ripeness of faith, the attainment of which should be one of the great aims of life.

I. WHEREIN CONSISTS THE BLESSINGS ARISING FROM TRIBULATIONS?

1. *A Test.* They serve as a test of the strength and genuineness of our faith. Only some such test as gives us a reliable view of the inner strength of our soul's citadel. The knowledge of the truth is our only safety, and happy should we be if some light affliction of time reveal to us the barrenness and deadness of our sinful hearts, and thus arouse our energies to seek the life divine.

In our Lord's parable of the two houses, it was only when the storms came, and the wind blew, and the rain fell and beat upon the houses, that the baseless fabric of one of them was swept away with its treacherous foundation, while the other defied the storm and stood strong through the rock on which it was built. Just so, when life's storms arise, the winds of temptation blow, and the rains of sorrow fall, we find whether our faith has built on the shifting treacherous sand of time, or upon the immovable Rock of Ages.

Two ships ride at anchor. They seem to be equally safe while all is calm. But a hurricane sweeps over the sea. One of them endures the strain and proudly holds her own amid the raging of the elements, while the other on account of a flaw in a single link is swept from its moorings and dashed to a hopeless wreck. Affliction will

thus test our moorings, and show us whether our hope's anchor is cast "within the veil;" and is held by a perfect faith, or whether all is a vain delusion of earth.

Before the Franco-Prussian war commenced no nation presented a bolder front, or made a more pretentious display of power than France. Judging from outward appearances and repeated boasts she might have been looked upon by the world as of all the nations the most powerful. But the day of trial came, a day well calculated to test her strength, and instead of bringing her a triumph it tore away her flimsy mask and exposed her real weakness to the astonished world. France's greatest enemy was not Germany, her darkest day was not when she lay crushed at the feet of the conqueror, for that may prove to be the dawn of the brightest and best day of her national history. Her greatest enemy was an inward effeminacy, and profligacy, and immorality, nurtured by years of forgetfulness of God. That was her darkest, saddest day when she rejected the God of Providence, and bowed at the shrine of sensuality and self. So it is in the case of individuals. We may put in a plausible appearance, and let the world imagine that we are soldiers of the cross, and clad in the panoply of heaven. But some jeering word is spoken and our coward hearts begin to shrink. If persecution arises our faith is robbed of its power, and our glory is trodden in the dust. But if we are planted on the Rock of Ages, and the inner principle of the divine life and power gives reality to the outward form of godliness, then, indeed, we can defy the world's scoff, and all the powers of sin.

Tribulations do not always mean great afflictions which harrow a man's inmost soul, or some great effort of the adversary to carry us away as with a flood. They are also

those little conflicts or struggles of life which test a man's real principle and show of what stuff he is made. The dam of a mill-pond may hold up its immense weight of water, swollen by the torrents of spring. But one or two drops find their way through some little hidden crevice, these are followed by others and more, until the little opening becoming wider and wider, admits a stream which in time ruins the whole fabric. We must watch the little leaks, and guard against the little foxes too. Our real strength is tested more by life's little things than by our greater trials. And happy the man or woman who can carry a heart cheerful and strong, a spirit unsullied and hopeful, a temper unsoured and Christ-like amid life's trifling cares, connected with our every day experience, and of such a character that they should never go beyond the thresholds of home.

Trials expose the weakness of the weak. But as the thunder storm spans the blue vault with glory's arch or the shades of night bring to our view the beauties of the star-set heavens and the quivering Aurora, so the storms of life cast a glory over the Christian's experience, and our dark hours reveal hidden virtues and powers of that soul whose conversation is in heaven.

II. AS A PROMOTER OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Tribulations do not merely test the soul's strength and the reality of our faith, they have also an important object to gain, they bring forth a blessed fruit in those who are rightly exercised thereby. We find in many Christians a marked ripeness of faith and character, and we find in almost every instance that this is the result of sanctified affliction without which they probably never would have attained that degree of development in Christian manhood. In

the spring time the farmer passes a heavy roller over the fields in which the tender blades of the grain crop have just shot forth into life. He seems to crush that life and tread into the dust his hopes of the coming harvest ; but out of the soil now rendered more firm the plant rises stronger than ever and bears a better fruit than it otherwise would have done. So the great Husbandman of Souls seems to crush the tender heart, but it is only that it may rise stronger and purer than ever.

When passing through sorrow it is hard to see so far, we can't understand the way by which we are being led, our eyes are so blinded by tears that we can see nothing beyond. We may allow the general principle, but when we are called upon to apply it to our own experience we are often more than perplexed, and ask, with Tennyson :

“ And who shall so forecast the years,
And find in loss a gain to match ;
Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far off interest of tears ? ”

'Tis faith which draws from affliction its wealth of blessing. If we have but real faith in Him who doeth all things well, our life's crosses become wings to waft our souls aloft, “ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. iv. 17.) But if our faith is wanting, they become a terrible weight, which sinks us to the earth.

“ Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.” Upon what sort of an experience is this hope built? 'Tis this, the Shepherd of our souls has never led us through a dark valley or over a

desert wild, without revealing to us a treasure there, and then guiding us out into an open field, where He leads us beside the still waters, and perfectly restores our souls. We find that the hand which afflicts pours oil into the wounded heart, and heals the contrite spirit. Such experience gives us hope for the future.

“Before I was afflicted I went astray :” says the Psalmist, “but now have I kept Thy word.” (Ps. cxix. 67.) The prodigal son began to think of father and home only when the hand of affliction was laid on him. Manasseh began to reflect on his wickedness, and to turn to the God of his fathers, only when every earthly hope had fled. If prosperity causes us to forget or scorn the riches of grace, then it is that we are really poor, but if the days of affliction have only driven us to the Saviour, these are the happiest and best days of our lives. We mourn sometimes a sudden loss, we are surprised by some unforeseen ill. We can’t imagine the reason of such a visitation, we see no object to be gained thereby. But let us not forget that an All-seeing Eye was watching over our lot and shaping our destiny. Our Father saw perhaps some snare which the enemy had laid for our feet, and in His mercy took the means of guiding us into safety. Now we mourn and talk of afflictions which fill our hearts with anguish, and our mouths with lamentation, but when we are beyond the flood, and know even as we are known, we shall see them all as blessings in disguise and subjects of praise.

We find in all God’s dealings with man a revelation of infinite goodness which strives to rescue the soul, as well as of infinite wisdom which seeks to hinder sin. The object of the chastisements is clearly given in the word of God :—“Lo, all these things worketh God oft times with

man to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." "In the day of adversity *consider*," says the preacher. His goodness should lead us to repentance, and His rod should teach us wisdom. "Behold, happy is the man whom the Lord correcteth," therefore, "despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty, for He maketh sore and bindeth up, He woundeth and His hand maketh whole. He shall deliver thee out of six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee."

"Experience worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." No, because it is a well-grounded hope. Just as the sturdy oak becomes more firmly rooted in the soil, because of the wind and the storm, so our hope becomes firmer and stronger, because struggle and triumph in our experience strengthen the roots of our faith. Blessed indeed is the fruit of tribulation. "Hope making not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." The love of God! When we can regard the matter in the light of God's love, oh! what a blessed peace it brings into the soul. The peace of God! A peace wonderful in its influence, "which passeth all understanding." A peace which enters the heart when crushed and panting after life, which penetrates more profoundly into the heart's depths than any influence of earth. A peace which comes to solace weary restless spirits, which have found earth's delights to be mere illusions. Ah, how many there are who have held the door of their hearts fast closed against the Saviour who stood without knocking for admittance, until affliction made them bow the head of pride, and caused them to welcome the messenger of peace. But when the peace of God enters the heart, it

heals our wounds and more than compensates for all of life's woes.

III. STRENGTH OF THE WEAK. We sing :

“ Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly.”

And also :

“ Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.”

And so it is. In this world of sadness we have but one city of refuge, only one way of escape, and that is through Him who is “the way, the truth, and the life.” “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” “But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.” When earth's joys grow dim, and transient pleasures fade away; when love bears sorrow and sadness, and dear ones are snatched from our sight; when our bodies are stricken with disease, and we are made to feel our mortality, our comfort is to be found only in the possession of a hope of life eternal. When our souls are tired of sin, disgusted with its treachery, and we turn from it with loathing in the soul, we find then there is a balm in Gilead and a physician there, who offers to every seeking soul life, and health, and peace.

The true peace of God is the result of the pardon of sin. “Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” When once we have heard the sweet voice of the Saviour speak to our own weary hearts that one word “peace,” we can never forget

its power. Oh ! what newness of life, what holy communion with the heavenly, what hope of better joys ! The peace of God in Jesus Christ ! To have the assurance in our hearts that God is reconciled with us in Jesus, to feel that we have in Him a better rest, to know that a nobler inheritance is reserved for us—that is more than all the possible joys of earth. What would this earth be without this confidence and hope, which stretches beyond the tomb ? The world would be dark and gloomy, death a horrid phantom, the grave an insatiable abyss. But lo ! Jesus gives His peace, not as the world gives, but a consolation, a hope, an assurance, which neither tribulation nor death itself *can shake*.

Let us then carry our burdens to Jesus. We bring to Him the load of sorrow that weighs us down, the weight of woe which almost crushes our hearts. He takes our burden and replaces it with His *peace*. He robs affliction of its sting, and changes sorrow into blessing. We find strength and consolation in the knowledge of His sympathy, and in the assurance of His power to save. We can never carry our life's burdens alone ; we must have help and counsel. We may try the world with its light-heartedness and folly—but sooner or later the world will prove insufficient and unsatisfactory. We find there no real sympathy or strength. The world is too light and trifling for the sad heart, and ridicules our tears. The world is a desert waste to the peace-seeking soul. Christ is our only refuge, our only perfect friend. We rejoice, 'tis true, in the sympathy of other friends, but they are all like ourselves, fallible and mortal. But the Saviour's strength manifests its power in our weakness ; it is made perfect in our feebleness, hence "Cast all your cares upon

Him for He careth for you." There was an old pilgrim to the better country who was as well known for his life of trial as for his uniform cheerfulness and trust in God. When asked the cause of this cheerfulness and content, while his lot in life was so hard, "Oh," said he, "couple heaven with it and you can understand me." There we find one of the hidden springs of the Christian's joy, and the things that are seen by faith are eternal.

The mountain hunter in his chase after the bounding chamois, is led far from his cottage home. A storm suddenly overtakes him, and his homeward journey is fraught with danger and toil. Through the blinding snow he wearily threads his way; benumbed with the cold, his heart faints within him. Suddenly his thoughts bound through the intervening space, and give new hope and courage to his heart, by presenting to his mind his fireside and the loved ones there who wait for his return. He sees their forms from afar, he hears their voices above the storm; the absent and distant ones are present with his spirit, and give him an astonishing strength of perseverance. So with the pilgrim to Zion. Weary from life's burdens, harrassed by its cares, downcast from life's sad history, crushed by sorrow unknown to the world, he becomes inspired with new courage and comfort and hope, when the eye of faith presents to his mind "the King in His beauty, and the land which is afar off." Glorious things are spoken of this land, this city of the Great King. "And there shall be no more curse." "And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying,

neither shall there be any more pain, the former things are passed away." "What are these arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" asked the angel of the wondering John, and answers himself, "These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

" There is a home for weary souls,
By sin and sorrow driven,
When tossed on life's tempestuous shoals,
Where storms arise and ocean rolls,
And all is drear but heaven.

" There fragrant flowers immortal bloom,
And joys supreme are given,
There rays divine disperse the gloom ;
Beyond the confines of the tomb
Appears the dawn of heaven."





THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

SERMON XIX.

BY REV. GEORGE DOUGLAS, LL.D., PRINCIPAL
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“For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”—
I. THES. i. 5.



HIS text is found in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian Church. Ancient Thessalonica was the chief seaport of Macedonia, and it is noteworthy that the great Apostle loved large cities and great centres of commercial power. This place was remarkable alike for its opulence, for its great architectural splendours, and for its scholastic eminence. Opening with the memorable mission to Phillippi, this Thessalonica was the second place on the European continent where the banner of the Gospel had been uplifted by Paul. Here his ministry was mightily commended by God, and was attended with a great intellectual quickening, and as we have it here in the lesson, with the salvation of multitudes. As the imme-

diate and natural result of this, the synagogues became forsaken, and the classic temples deserted by the thousands who were wont to worship there.

That Asiatic adventurer—one who came not with excellence of speech or with wisdom of words—one who was in bodily presence contemptible—that he should dislocate and disarrange the existing order of things in this proud and haughty city, caused the deepest indignation. The natural result followed. They assaulted the Apostle, they summarily expelled him from the city ; yet with a wealth of affection, which I think, and I suppose you think, the first attribute in the character of Paul, he clung to this church of his early love, and when philosophic adversaries undertook to shake the confidence of that church in his apostolic character as well as in the divinity of the Gospel itself—when, I say, they undertook to shake the confidence of the church in the Gospel and its exponent, he penned the first of all the epistles he ever wrote to this church. How appropriately he opens it, with this beautiful reminder of the divinity of the Gospel “ Our Gospel,” he says, “ came not unto you in word only”—not like the cold platonic speculation—not like the Homeric song—not like the brilliant oration that may thrill for the moment and then die upon the lips ; no, “ our Gospel came not in word only, but in power,” commanding the attention and the knowledge of the intellect. But it came also “ in the Holy Ghost,” and with much divine and experimental assurance.

That power which belongs to the Gospel of God—who can tell it ? The mystery of power—who can reveal it ? All ages have sought, and all science at this hour is seeking to solve the problem of power. Power in its lowest

conditions belongs to all things material. There is power in the storm of the elements which we have just witnessed. It is in the waves of the sea that, like the wilful child, sports with the vessel that floats on its bosom. It is in the lightning and the thunderbolt that, like maniacs, smite all around with destruction. It is found in connection with every material element which exists in the universe of God. But there is a higher, more ultimate form of power, if I may so speak ; it is that which belongs to that unseen, subtle, immaterial something which we denominate thought. What is it that gives energy to man, what is it that strikes his colossal intelligence, and enables him to see that this is "a thing of beauty and a joy forever?" What is it that gave birth to those poetic strains that have thrilled the ages, and forged and framed those rallying cries of justice, liberty, and freedom, which have stormed and taken captive myriads of human hearts in the history of the world? What is it but that unseen, untenable something which we denominate thought. Now, if you cast back your minds, as you sit here this morning, to that time in the far past when every force in the universe existed but as a divine force in the divine mind ; and if we also turn to our text and ask, What is that power which belongs to the Gospel? I answer it is not purely mysterious ; it is grander than mystery ; it is the heart-compelling power that slumbers in the great seed-thoughts that belong to our great Gospel.

Permit me to illustrate this point by quoting one or two of those seed-thoughts. What magnetic thrilling power, for instance, belongs to the divine thought of a God incarnate and manifest in our flesh. If you speak to me of one high in rank, of a kingly potentate, or say, for illustration, our Sovereign Lady the Queen ; tell me of her long ances-

tral line from the Tudors and Plantagenets downward ; tell me of her diadem and her sceptre, of the great throne upon which she sits, and the dazzling splendour with which she is surrounded, and it may excite a passing interest and admiration—certainly nothing more. But tell me that beneath this royal splendour there throbs a warm but widowed heart, that wept long and refused to be comforted ; a mother's heart, which yearns for the highest weal of her beloved children ; the gentle heart, full of sympathy, that gladly throws aside the tinsel of royalty to minister to the wants of the poor, and you have started a power that takes hold of my heart, and of every heart which hears the intelligence.

Community of nature, sympathy in suffering and in sorrow, are potential, and imperial over the spirits of men. And now, what of the great historic conceptions of God—the God of the Hebrew prophets, of Job, and of Moses—what is he ? He is the personification of honour, majesty, and power. His power is such that they said of Him that He weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, and that he taketh up the isles as a very little thing ; that He rides upon the wings of the wind, and maketh the whirlwind a chariot ; that the saints and the winged seraphim do homage to Him, while ten thousand times ten thousand angels minister unto Him. When I hear the intelligence of all this, I bow my head in humility and reverence, and something that is tinged with fear ; and yet how cold, and how distant—how weary am I with the untenable infinities that belong to these conceptions of God.

Let us now turn to the doctrine of a God incarnate in our own flesh ; and in the Gospel which teaches that doc-

trine we have disclosures of Him as Immanuel, God with us, and in relations to humanity which the most venturous imagination never before dared to conceive. We see Him where and how? We see Him as a babe slumbering in His mother's arms ; we see Him as a gladsome growing boy ; we see Him for thirty years amid the social barbarities and lowliness of Nazareth ; we see Him joyous at the marriage in Cana, and weeping with the weepers at Bethany ; we see Him, in His humanity, curing disease, succouring distress, and calming, with a voice of authority, the stormy bosom of the sea ; we see Him commanding the sepulchral dead to come back to life and intelligent consciousness, and then—oh mystery of God !—we see Him bow His head in meekness and die. Yes, and more than this : when He was about to depart did He not say, “ I will not leave you comfortless ; ” did He not, when sitting on the summit of Olivet, when he was about to bid defiance to all the forces that bound Him to this earth, leave us the comforting assurance “ Lo, I am with you always ”—I thank my God for that—“ even unto the end of the world.”

I appeal to you to-day if these familiar truths do not come home to you as if they were under a new revelation ; if this “ old, old story ” has not a vitality in it that makes it ever new? I appeal to you if there is not a forcefulness in this old text that holds and commands the homage of the intellect and of the heart? If a man is strong, healthy, and self-reliant, if he has need of no help, of course there is less power in it ; but to the wasted, to the worn, to the bereaved, to those who have known the world and its emptiness, I ask if there is not a power in this without price, and unspeakable? He is a father God

and a mother God—for we will not let woman alone take charge of that element of tenderness. He is a brother God, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, whose heart has thrilled and throbbed with the same emotions as our own. Your brother, my brother! We stand before the mystery and bow in homage before it. Great is the mystery of godliness, that form of infinite grace which came down, took hold of us, bound us by an everlasting bond of love to Himself, and lifted our humanity to godliness. Go, publish it abroad, proclaim this gospel of incarnation to the world, for it is potential as a force, and takes hold of the strongest elements of our nature.

But again, we notice as a great, divine, and forceful seed-thought of the gospel, the atonement and self-sacrifice for the good of others. If you have ever studied the point you will notice that there is scarcely an intimation of this doctrine in the universe outside of the Gospel. I know it is customary for the psalmists and high priests of nature to speak of this as the best possible world, with many advantages and but few drawbacks. But, my brethren, the more profoundly you investigate the situation the more utterly are you perplexed. It would seem as if the very law of the universe was founded upon the principle of selfishness. Follow in the train of those great scientific authorities that have opened up the foundations of nature, and what do they tell? They tell us that the first creation was inorganic matter, and made it into the likeness of itself; then came vegetable life that absorbed this inorganic matter; then came animal life which devoured the vegetable life and made it into the likeness of itself. Then came bestial life that preyed

upon both vegetable and animal life, completing the round, as the poet has appropriately put it,

“Of rapine and ruin that pervades the universal world.”

Lastly, came the era of intellect, of mind and man—his physical nature making use of the vegetable and animal life in order to live, and his mind at war with both God and nature. The more you search the history of this world as revealed outside of the Gospel, the more you see that there is little of kindness, little of benevolence. On the other hand, we find that condition of things only too prevalent which is described by the Psalmist:—“Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues have they deceived; the poison of asps is under their lips, their feet are swift to shed blood.” Now it was into this world—this world seemingly built upon a principle of selfishness—that God flashed the new light, that He projected the new thought—that of atonement and self-sacrifice for the good of others, and it was into this arena that He sent His Son. He was the man of sorrow and acquainted with grief; it was He that suffered, not for His own faults but for the faults of others, and laid down the principle that a man should die for the people, while He consecrated and offered Himself up a sacrifice for that purpose. “He gave His back to the smiter, and His cheeks to those who pluck off the hair.” He that held up the universe fainted beneath the cross; He that could command the presence and aid of legions of angels was cast off, and in darkness, alone, and with the wail of the forsaken upon His lips, He died for you and for me. Oh! who can stand beneath the cross—I wonder that my heart does not melt more, and that yours do not

melt more at the thought—who, I ask, can stand beneath the cross and gaze upon this sublime example of self-sacrifice without feeling that there is a power in that cross which is both infinite and indescribable. We are familiar with the force that swept out over this world at its creation, how in an instant this gravitating power held the particles of God's vast empire in bonds, and bound them down together with a universal grasp. But it only binds matter ; it cannot bind mind. This, however, is the grandeur of the power of the cross :—"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." The world then entered upon a new era. There was an example of self-sacrifice—of atonement for the sins of others.

Let us see for a moment what the effect of that example has been. Let us remember it has been the cause of starting and supporting relief for the poor, how it has promoted the amity of mutual relations between man and man, how it has built up charities, how it has controlled civilization and the formation of international laws, and how it shall continue to do so until the prediction of the prophets shall be realized, until nation shall have ceased to lift up its sword against nation, and they shall learn the art of war no more. Tell me, ye wild winds, where are the caves of your beginning ? Tell me, ye silent stars, what secrets do ye hold in your keeping ? Ye can never tell, and no angelic intellect can ever frame words to tell the power that slumbers in this divine author. Have you felt this power, my brother ? Has it caused you to put on holiness and consecrate your life to Christ ? Wherever the Gospel of Christ comes, it is the gospel of life.

Once again in this connection, a great seed-thought of

power in the Gospel is that of resurrection—of immortality. Who can measure the shadows that fall upon the home where the light of Christianity has not fallen? The heathen mother loves her child as fondly as the Christian mother; but when the shadows of the sepulchre begin to fall around the pagan home, when the grim monster wrenches the idol of her heart from her breast and hides it in the dust, what consolation can come to her—what is there to bring comfort and compensation to her distracted mind? The words of the song that nobody sings, the words that were lisped by little lips, the little shoes and the baby clothes she used to wear—all these little mementoes which fond affection cherishes are still there, but can she, as she stands over the remains of her loved and lost one, can she look away into the golden hereafter, and see the coming time when the glorious morning shall dawn upon the night of the tomb, and her loved one shall rise again in the beauty of immortality which will then be imparted to it? Alas, alas! she cannot. If she only could, how it would lift her spirit up, and crown her with the coronet of her beatific hope. This is the power which comes from our Christianity and the Gospel.

I have somewhere read, some little time ago—I forget the author—that the most emphatic stride made in the history of the race was the supreme moment when Galileo pointed his telescope to the heavens and discovered the satellites of Jupiter, and there flashed up in his mind the glorious thought of an infinity above, and the second supreme hour of intelligence was that in which a number of fossil bones were laid before the naturalist Buffon, and there opened before his mind the proofs of a pre-Adamite age of existence. In this supreme hour of

the history of the human race, man for the first time opened the territory of the Infinite, for the first time had a peep at the hidden secrets of past ages. But what is all this, great and glorious though it be, to the grandeur of that prescience which looks for a future immortality, to a grand eternity open for humanity, and which sees in that future, and that immortality, life and love that last forever. Men and brethren, what divinity, and dignity does this fling about the elements of humanity. I think of poor Lazarus at the rich man's gate, his only friends the dogs that licked his sores ; I think of him as dying alone and forsaken, and then

“ Over the stones they rattle his bones,
He's only a beggar whom nobody owns.”

Yet not alone ; I also remember that, according to this Gospel, when the beggar dies, angels carry him in their arms—for him the everlasting gates lift up their heads—for him the bosom of Abraham is prepared—for him are in store the beatitudes of God. He will hunger no more, thirst no more, die no more. Now, I ask you to think for a moment of the subject suggested by the great Apostle, to study this gospel of incarnation, of atonement, and of self-sacrifice for the good of others—to look still further to this gospel of resurrection and immortality, and you can understand how it is that it is the power of God unto salvation.

I come to the experimental testimony that is created—“ This Gospel came with much assurance.” Now, there are several modes of assurance. There is, first of all, assurance by the demonstration of others, in the divinity of authority, and I ask you to call to memory the lesson

of this morning with regard to the introduction of the Gospel into Thessalonica. Does it not look like a paragraph from early Methodist history? The Apostle, as his custom was, reasoned with the people out of the Scriptures, and with him was Jason whose house was opened to him. And on account of his preaching, and the success which attended it, the Jews, who believed not, moved with envy, took certain fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company and set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, seeking to drag Paul out before the people. My brethren, wherever the Gospel goes it turns the world upside down ; it means revolution, it means reform, it means regeneration—the regeneration of society and human hearts. When the Apostle was writing to the Corinthians, he described certain men as having divorced themselves from virtue, and gone into alliance with death and hell. “Now,” he said, “such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of your God.” There was an omnipotent power which took hold of the intellect and moral manhood of these Corinthians, and built them up into a noble manhood ; and, as I stand here this morning and look you in the face, I would not venture to say that you were like the Corinthians—that you once cared for none of these things, but a sovereign power took hold of your innermost being, and has renovated you and made “you new men and women in Christ Jesus. “Oh !” says Paul, “I was the chief of sinners, but by the grace of God I am what I am ;” and they took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus. There is then, the assurance of experience. The Apostle John says, “he

that believeth hath a witness in himself." This Gospel does not hide its head in darkness, but with the light of heaven in its face, it walks about before men and courts investigation. Try it and see if it will not give you a joyous sense of sin forgiven. Try it, ye men of vain and unholy desires, and see if it will not gloriously emancipate you. Try it, ye culprits of the night, round whose hearts there hang the dead leaves of a blighted memory—try it, and see if it does not bind up the broken heart. Who are they who are arrayed in white robes? They are those who have gone before, that have turned over the leaf of the hymn-book at your side, and mingled their voices and their prayers with yours. They speak this morning from heaven, and they combine their testimony with the testimony of Christians upon earth. Theirs would be a sublime relation of the experimental power of the Gospel.

Finally—and with this I close—there is the assurance of former triumph and victory. "Oh," says the Apostle, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or nakedness, or peril, or famine, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." One of the greatest scientific authorities in England, when on the verge of death, said to a friend, "My philosophic friend, I am afraid of the sepulchre." The finest intellect that Scotland ever knew—I refer to Hume—when he came to the

moment of death, said, "I am going to take a leap in the dark." What does our Christian Apostle say? He says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." There is here no mistaking the certainty with which he hopes for the future crown of brilliant immortality, and as he adds, it is not for himself only, but for all those who love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this very city, in connection with this very church, we have seen in the past many cases where robust boyhood and beautiful girlhood—we have seen cultured and scholarly manhood with intellect that searched the foundations of the earth, and complete and admirable womanhood, with a world of affection and goodness—we have seen them cross the river of death, with a sublime certainty of the future, and a triumphant confidence in God's salvation; and—why should we hesitate to declare it—some of us have gone far into the valley—have thought indeed that we were over the river; and yet through all there was a divine confidence that elevated us with an assurance of the better life. This was the work of the Gospel of God, and there be many hearts that respond to-day, and testify that they have been sustained and comforted.

After many years and many sorrows, and once again looking into the faces of many I know, and yet more I know not, I would pray that my feeble words to-day may bring some of you to Jesus. May the Holy Spirit help you to come to Christ; may he make us all better and prepare us to die, and may we gain with years a growing confidence in the Gospel; and may we be ready to sub-

scribe to the last verse of the hymn we are going to sing this morning :—

“ Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous might,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And pin Thy Gospel to my heart.”





THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE.

SERMON XX.

BY REV. W. WILLIAMS, HESPELER.

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.—Eph. ii, 20, 21, 22.



N tracing the development of the great scheme of redemption, we find a gradual transition from the sensible to the spiritual. In the earlier ages the Divine Being manifested His presence by tokens which were visible to the natural eye, and spoke with a voice which was heard by the natural ear. Moses saw the burning bush at Horeb and heard the proclamation of the great “I AM.” The children of Israel beheld the fiery pillar which guided them through the wilderness, and listened to the voice which spake with them out of the mysterious cloud. The truth was shadowed forth, rather than clearly taught, by the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical economy. The prophets predicted the glories of the kingdom of grace in

symbolical terms, the profound meaning of which they had not yet fully reached. It was not until the Christian dispensation was inaugurated, that evangelical truth was clearly and literally taught, and the mysteries of the preceding ages received their explanation. The utterances of the New Testament writers and speakers were so definite and intelligible that they soon found the way to the hearts of their hearers. The spirituality of their ministrations was equal to their clearness. Instructed by the Holy Ghost, men heard, and feared, and turned unto the Lord.

But the apostles were not prepared to ignore the previous dispensation. They felt and acknowledged their obligation to it, and recognised the connection that existed between it and the system which followed it. The "foundation of the apostles" was also the foundation of "the prophets," and in their estimation, the blessings of the gospel day were the results of the regular, and harmonious development of a plan of redemption which was revealed to the progenitors of our race immediately after the fall. In that plan the Levitical economy had its place, and purpose. It marked the pictorial stage in the religious education of our race. When the world was in its childhood, it furnished the "object lessons" which at once interested and instructed it. Though the dispensation is gone, its symbols remain. Many of them were reproduced by the New Testament writers with great effect, and by none more frequently than the Apostle Paul. Our text affords us an illustration of the manner in which he used them to illustrate spiritual truths. We cannot read the passage before us without thinking of the magnificent temple of Solomon which is evidently referred to. To the converted Jews, whose memories were stored with traditions concerning

“the glory of the former house,” and to the Ephesian converts, whose city was adorned with one of the most splendid temples of ancient times, this reference was as interesting as it was instructive. To the Christian of the present day, who remembers that the patterns of heavenly or spiritual things were found in the ordinances of the preceding dispensation, its beauty and propriety are obvious. This comparison, which is rather implied, than stated, clearly and impressively sets forth the leading features of the Church of Christ. Without following the comparison into its details, we shall notice :—

First, the spiritual temple to which the text refers.

It is founded upon Christ. He is “the foundation of the apostles and prophets;” “the chief corner stone.” The Prophet Isaiah, referring to the same subject, says, “Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” Elsewhere the apostle pens the following statement, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” The blessed Redeemer utters a similar declaration in relation to himself, “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.” As the chief corner stone is the largest, strongest and most important in the building, binding together the walls upon which the superstructure rests, this term is applied to Christ “to suggest,” as Dr. Fairbairn appropriately observes, “His fundamental importance as prophet, priest and king to the church—the massive strength of this foundation, and its admirable fitness for at once sustaining and binding together in blessed fellowship, the whole brotherhood of believers.” The Christian system rests upon the person and work of Christ. If this “chief corner stone”

be taken away, the temple must fall. In the religion of the New Testament, Christ is "all and in all." He is the strength and support of His church. Because He lives His people live, and while He lives His Church shall endure. Every Christless system of religion has perished, or must perish. Where is the religion of ancient Egypt? a religion which adorned the banks of the Nile with temples, and gave to the nation a race of priests so celebrated for their acquirements that to be "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" was to have reached the highest intellectual eminence then attainable. Where are the religions of warlike Assyria, classic Greece, and imperial Rome? They have perished with the nations that adhered to them, for Christ was not in them. Equally disastrous is the career of those who reject Him. In the religion revealed from Sinai to the ancient Jews, Christ was certainly present. By type and shadow He was evidently set forth before them, and the atonement was its fundamental principle. But that principle the apostate posterity of Abraham refused to recognise. Whilst they went about to establish their own righteousness, they rejected and slew Him. What was the result? Their temple was destroyed, their city desolated, and they became homeless wanderers over the earth. Let us of the present generation learn the lesson taught by the history of the past. Let us remember that no Christless morality, however high its standard; no Christless philanthropy, however benevolent its design; no Christless philosophy, however plausible its theories, can take the place of Christianity. The various systems of infidelity, superstition and error that are at present in existence must pass away, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken their doom, but Chris-

tianity, resting upon "the stone which the builders rejected," may defy the tempest and the flood.

This temple is not constructed of earthly materials, but of saved and sanctified souls. Countless thousands who were once defiled and deformed by sin, have been cleansed from pollution, restored to the Divine likeness, polished after the similitude of a palace, and built into the rising walls of this glorious structure. The Great Architect has a place in this edifice for every converted sinner, be he rich or poor, bond or free, learned or unlearned, endowed with ten talents or only one. Many already stand as pillars in the temple, prominent and permanent, while others adorn it as with pure and precious gold. To many, comparatively obscure positions are assigned, but they are all honourable in the sight of Him who looks at the heart, and in due time, "He shall bring forth *their* righteousness as the light, and *their* judgment as the noonday." The "apostles and prophets" are honoured in being specially mentioned by the inspired writer in connection with this subject. Though they were weak and fallible men, infinitely beneath the Son of God in nature and dignity, yet they were "workers together with him;" and their close association with Christ as well as their importance as parts of the spiritual temple, are indicated by the position assigned them. There we find an Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," and the first of prophets in the order of time; a Moses, whose prophetic character was attested by his prediction of the coming of a mightier lawgiver than himself; a David, whose inspired utterances fell from his lips in the flowing numbers of sacred song; an Isaiah, anticipating with radiant countenance the glories of Messiah's kingdom; a Jeremiah, whose eye is no longer dim with

weeping, and an Ezekiel, whose writings glow with gospel light. There too, we find the eloquent and impetuous Peter, the loving John, the learned and logical Paul, and others of whom the world was not worthy, but to whom Christ has given an honourable place in His temple.

This spiritual structure is declared by the apostle to be *holy*. In the earlier ages the temple of Solomon was solemnly dedicated to the worship of the Most High. The very materials used in its construction were sanctified. The names of the inner apartments of the temple, the "Holy Place," and the "Most Holy Place" were suggestive of the utmost sanctity. The priests who ministered at the altar were consecrated with rites of peculiar significance and were "holy unto the Lord." The very height upon which "the house of the Lord" rested was spoken of by the Psalmist as "the mountain of His Holiness." If the material temple was thus carefully preserved from pollution, the spiritual temple is defended with equal care from defilement. Though serious defects may mar the purity, and impair the usefulness of the visible church, the mystical body of Christ is immaculate. Purity cannot embrace pollution. He who is "glorious in holiness" cannot admit to alliance with Himself those who are not conformed to His image. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. "Holiness," said the sweet singer of Israel, "becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." These conditions are unalterable. They are applicable to our spiritual relations in this life and the life to come. The redeemed in heaven "are without fault before the throne of God," they "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of

the Lamb." Of the holy city, New Jerusalem, it is said, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood upon the cross, that he might sanctify and cleanse His Church—"That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

This glorious temple is declared to be "a habitation of God through the Spirit:" God has never left Himself without witness. "The presence of the Lord" is a phrase that occurs in the sacred history of our race at a very early period. It was something well defined in the minds of the earliest members of the human family. Our guilty first parents hid themselves, and Cain went out "from the presence of the Lord." The time and place of those appearances were well known. It may be that Enoch was continually favoured with a visible manifestation of the presence of Jehovah, as the children of Israel subsequently were. In this way the church was, at that early period, "a habitation of God." The glory of the Lord afterwards filled the tabernacle, and in the days of Solomon occupied the "Most Holy Place" in the Temple. The prophets were favoured with visions in which they enjoyed intercourse with God. In the fulness of time the Shekinah, and visions of the Jewish dispensation gave place to the incarnate Word, and God was manifest in the flesh. But "the Holy Ghost was not yet given." Another manifestation of the Divine presence was to be made. Before the Son of God ascended to the right hand of the Father He said to His disciples, "Lo, I am with you alway even

unto the end of the world," referring to His spiritual presence which should remain with the Church through all time. He had previously led His people to expect the Holy Ghost, and this expectation was connected with a positive command to wait for its fulfilment, "And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." They waited in prayer and faith until the promised blessing came : cloven tongues like as of fire rested upon their heads, a heavenly baptism descended upon their hearts, and the dispensation of the Spirit was inaugurated. From that time until the present the Church of God has been a "habitation of God *through the Spirit* ;" the Holy Ghost has been in the world convincing sinners of sin, converting them to God, and testifying to their renewal by grace. He has been with His ministers making the preached word effectual, attracting souls to the cross, and spreading the kingdom of Christ. He has been with His people aiding them in their religious exercises, clothing them with light and salvation, making them men of might, sanctifying and comforting their spirits, and making them meet for the celestial inheritance. This Divine Person shall remain in His Church to the end of time, fulfilling the Redeemer's promise, extending the influence of the truth, and hastening the coming of the day when Jesus "shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Then the dispensation of grace shall be followed by the days of glory, when the beatific vision shall be enjoyed, and it shall be said, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ;

and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away."

Secondly. Having noticed the leading features of the spiritual temple we would call your attention to the process of its construction.

This process was gradual and progressive. The Church was not formed by a creative world. It did not spring into being full orbéd and perfect at once. The inspired writer of our text says it "*groweth* unto an holy temple in the Lord." Its construction began with the salvation of the first sinner. It is evident that there were some who served God before the flood, and these collectively formed a visible church at that early period. After the deluge, also, there were those who maintained the worship of the true God. After Abraham obeyed the Divine call, he, his household and those who were of like faith and practice constituted the church. The same is true of the successive households of Isaac and Jacob. When the children of Israel were assembled at the base of Sinai, Jehovah recognised them as His people and gave them the law and the covenant. Those who came from surrounding nations to worship with the people of God, generally associated themselves with them in their civil as well as their religious privileges, so that salvation was, in a certain sense, of the Jews. But when the Lord Jesus Christ suffered upon the cross, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, the middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles was broken down, and it became evident that "God would have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The apostles, after our Saviour's resurrection, were commanded to "go into all the world

and preach the gospel to every creature," and men were soon led to know that "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." Since that time the gospel has been preached in almost every nation, and representatives from every quarter of the globe are now in the kingdom of God. But the work is by no means complete—it is scarcely begun. The whole earth is to be filled with the glory of God. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands is to become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. The rising walls of the temple are to be built up, and the whole structure completed in the harmony of its vast proportions. The work shall never cease "until the head stone thereof is brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace unto it."

Our text teaches us that the whole process of construction shall be carried on "in Christ." "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth &c." As Christ is the foundation, so is He the pervading spirit of the whole. He has been in the work, and with the workmen, from the beginning. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." It was Christ who cheered our fallen first parents with the promise of His own coming and victory, who led Abel and Enoch in the way of salvation, and saved Noah and "the church which was in his house" from the deluge. He it was who called Abraham, re-established and perpetuated the church in his family, who gave the law and the testimony to the trembling children of Israel; who inspired the prophets and commissioned the apostles. In spirit He is with His people still, cheer-

ing, supporting and strengthening them. Every part of the mystical building is under His inspection, every workman labours in His presence, and "in Christ" shall the structure be completed.

Our text reminds us of the mutual fitness and adaptation of the various parts of the spiritual temple, and the unity which shall characterize the completed structure. "In whom all the building *fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple.*" If we stand where a magnificent palace is about to be erected, and for which the materials are already collected on the ground, we see few or no indications of the splendid pile that is about to adorn the place. We know not the architect's purpose; we have not access to his plans and specifications. We see nothing but unsightly heaps of material thrown together, apparently without regard to order. But the architect knows what is to be done with that material, and in his mind is a picture of the completed structure. He sees order and beauty, where we see nothing but confusion. We return to the same place after a few years, and, instead of unsightly piles of brick and wood and stone, we see a stately palace, the splendid realization of the architect's design. As we look upon the various sections of the visible church, as we see them differing from each other in doctrines, government and modes of worship; as we see them rivalling, and sometimes antagonistic to, each other, we ask, "Is it possible to evolve from these discordant and antagonistic elements, a spiritual church distinguished for its unity, harmony and holiness?" Unbelief answers, "no, it can never be," Faith replies, "Yes, it shall be." The Great Architect is in the midst of the churches, and He will accomplish it. Though He has withheld from us the details of His glorious

plan, He has revealed its grand and comprehensive outline. That plan He is working out, and in due time we shall see its realization. The spiritual temple, one and undivided, complete in all its proportions, and adorned with the transcendent beauty of holiness, shall appear, the joy of earth, and the glory of the skies. The work is visibly progressing; men are losing sight of minor differences and holding fast only to essentials. Different sections of the Church have been united, and the hope that other movements in the same direction will reach a successful termination, cheers the people of God. Whether we shall ever see the visible church an unit or not, it is not for us to say; but the day is not far distant when the watchman on the walls of Zion "shall see eye to eye," when "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

Are we members of the Church of Christ, truly united to our living Head, built upon the sure foundation? Let us examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith; prove our own selves. A mistake in relation to a matter so important as this may be fatal. If among the people of God, let us do all we can to promote their spiritual welfare as well as our own. Let us by prayer, and faith, and the persevering pursuit of perfect purity, maintain our connection with Christ and His people, and promote the efficiency of the Church. Let us never weaken it by lukewarmness, nor disgrace it by apostacy.

Are we builders under God? There is much to encourage us here. We are connected with a most important enterprise, the construction of the spiritual temple; we are associated in a most honourable partnership, workers together with God, and we are assured of the certainty of our reward. Let us be careful lest we build into the struc-

ture, wood, hay or stubble, for our work shall be tried by fire and these shall be burned, and we shall suffer loss ; but let us build into God's temple good and enduring material, that shall pass unscathed through the testing process, then shall God be glorified in His people.

When the headstone is brought forth with shoutings of "grace, grace unto it" and the spiritual structure is complete ; when, radiant with the beauty of holiness, and glorified by the presence of the Most High, it shall present to an admiring universe the full realization of the Saviour's redeeming plan, may we be there to share the joy, and render our tribute of praise to Him, "who loved the Church and gave Himself for it." Amen.





CHURCH ORDER, A MEANS NOT AN END.

SERMON XXI.

BY REV. DAVID SAVAGE,

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Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament : not of the letter, but of the spirit : for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.—2 Cor. iii, 6.

Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.—1 Tim. i, 4, 5.

And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.—Heb. xii, 27, 28.



ONCE fell in with a statement to the effect that part of the mission of the existing order of things in this world is to illustrate and prove the capabilities of evil. And through all the history of the race no developments of evil have been more marked and awful than are to be seen in the perversion of what is in itself a good, to wrong and unworthy ends. Perhaps evil in its essence

may be regarded as simply *misappropriation*. History, we are wont to say, repeats itself. It is so with evil in its history—an awful history. Can we come upon anything sadder than this power of transmutation, in the results to which it has led? This representation of the case is just the reverse of that visionary and vain expectation of ancient alchemy which sought for properties supposed to be lodged in some fastness of nature, whose action would recover, restore, and universally and finally bless.

I might speak of this principle in its application within the sphere of things material, as where tons of grain-food lie rotting this moment in ten thousand distilleries, while ten thousand times ten thousand men, and women, and children are, whilst we sit here in comfort, suffering the pangs of hunger, and a prey to want. Or, in a more technical application of this same principle to the department of dietetics, I might speak of irregularities in the general use of food, such as medical science recognises as very fully underlying the numerous ailments and physical derangements that afflict the race. Or, coming to the realm of intellect, what a range of action has this power of misappropriation. In the various departments of literature and art and science, what fallacies, and failures, and wrongs are attributable to this cause.

O! what is the history of our race but the history—sad and appalling—of a waste of force. Capabilities which had they been utilized for the great ends which are proposed in social and political economies, would have lifted up and enriched mankind, have been neglected—allowed to lie fallow; or, what is worse, have been arrayed against each other; or still worse, have been marshalled to wage cruel

combat—summoned for fierce attack upon the dearest, and truest interests of mankind.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians, i. 26. What do we read there?—"Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." What is the explanation of this? Are "wisdom" and social position in themselves evil? No, not in themselves, but by perversion they are made so. It would almost seem as though this possibility on our part of converting into an evil what is in itself a good, furnishes the chief test of integrity in our case. For, be it observed, it is a test which is ever present with us. There is nothing so sacred but in our handling of it is capable of prostitution. Even the grace of God may be "turned into lasciviousness."

To open the way for the more particular application of the view before us to the case I would discuss, we had read to us a few moments since the account of Christ's interview with the woman of Samaria. What is all this but an illustration of the tendency there is with us to rest in the letter instead of being made perfect in the spirit. The Jews were at fault here, degrading to unworthy ends the honour of an illustrious ancestry, making it but the occasion of sin, as in their vain-glorious boasting they cried, "We have Abraham unto our father." Unduly *exalting*, and so misappropriating the externals of their religious system, involving, as we know all this did, the neglect of the "weightier matters of the law." And the history of Christianity is as sad in this respect as was the history of Judaism. What terrible sentences are these which have lately issued from one of the most influential pulpits in the world:

"For the sake of religion, for the sake of the Church,

for the honour of God amongst men it has been thought excusable for zeal to become a fire. Men have advocated and propagated an external Christianity by the sacrifice of every one of its internal attributes. The gates of hell have often opened into this world out of ecclesiastical judicatories. It has not been the Church that has preserved religion; it has been religion that has preserved the Church. To-day the whole Christian world is up in arms. Why? Because members of the Church live such worldly lives? O no, not if they behave well in ecclesiastical matters. The energy of thousands of noble brains is expended in the control of the external machinery."

It is said of French physicians that they have such a passion for the theory of their profession that a patient is not safe in their hands, for they are so bent on mastering the diagnosis of disease, as their subject offers a field for its study, that the recovery of the patient is subordinated to considerations of science, a larger acquaintance with the principles and theory of the disease being considered an ample set off to the death of the victim. Alas! do not we ecclesiastics act in much the same way as these medical scientists are reputed to do?

The word of the Apostle to the Corinthians has no doubt some measure of legitimate application to forms of Church order where he tells us: "There are differences of administration." But "it is the same spirit." As the body without the spirit is dead, so organism, though it have traditional *prestige*, the imprimatur of authority, so called, and all the sanction of the most hallowed associations, is empty and vain—a dead and useless thing, wanting the pulsations of a living Divine presence—the breath

of God. Says Fletcher of Madeley: "Forget not that Christ's Spirit is the savour of each believer's salt, and that He puts excellence into the good works of His people, else they could not be good. If thy works are compared to a rose, the colour and sweetness are Christ's; if to a burning taper, the bright and cheering light comes from thy Bridegroom." So of the Church of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, its honour, its glory, its efficiency are conditioned on what?—a faultless ritual? regularity and precision in its methods? a careful balancing of rights? the guarding of prerogative on the one hand, and an equal care for an unrestricted suffrage on the other hand? Not any or all of these—and no one of them would we depreciate—will avail for the Church's success.

Look at the homes scattered through this land. Some of them are palatial in their appearance and accommodations; some of them are humble enough. But is it the size of the building, or its material appointments, that give it the character of a home for its inmates? No; it is the domesticity that pervades its atmosphere. It is the presence of love in the subtle bonds of parental, filial, brotherly, sisterly regard that invest your dwelling with the untold charm and mighty magnetism which belong to home—and this, whether it be the palace of a Queen or the cot of a peasant. So as Christ stands in the midst of His people, breathes upon them, makes them to partake of His spirit, does His Church fulfil those conditions of brotherhood, peace, mutual and helpful services to which she is appointed. And as this breath Divine is imparted with the accompanying words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," is the Church furnished and equipped for the ful-

filment of her ministrations to the outlying world, and does she receive an investiture of power in virtue of which "Whosoever sins she remits they are remitted, and whosoever she retains they are retained."

Gibbon tells us of one of his heroes, Alexander Severus, that "he deemed the service of mankind the most acceptable worship of the gods." Perhaps we shall not go far astray if we accept this sentiment, even though it be from a heathen source. This is pre-eminently a practical, utilitarian age. Everything now-a-days is brought to the test of "*Cui bono.*" The great Macaulay fitly voices the genius of this modern period where your lot and mine, by God's appointing providence, are cast, when speaking of Plato, that grand old philosopher of the ancient period, praising his diction, he says: "It was such as was to be expected from the finest of human intellects exercising boundless dominion over the finest of human languages," but all this only to bring out by one of those contrasts of which the great historian was so perfect a master, the sweeping condemnation concerning Plato's philosophy, that, "it began in words and ended in words."

Do I unduly depreciate symptoms of Church Order if I express my conviction concerning them that their presence or their absence, their defectiveness or their symmetry and perfectness (approximate) have not had so fully to do with determining the moral and spiritual currents of this or any other age, as disciplinarians sometimes fondly conceive? Look at early Methodism. What made it such a power? Even when its processes were tentative, when its founder himself—if we may use the term founder in connection with such a movement as admissible at all when it refers to man—when Wesley himself was in doubt

concerning the legitimacy of its agencies, and the entire movement was challenged on all hands as an irregularity, resistless as the tides of the ocean it rose and advanced. As we stand and behold this great sight, how fitting as an expression of our wonder and almost bewilderment are the grand words of the 114th psalm.

That Church systems have a mission in this world I dare not question. But I am largely disposed to test their value by their products. Is not this a fair test? Not that these products always have for the advantage of such demonstration a "local habitation and a name." More than one Church system has no doubt produced results which elude processes of demonstration. Still the leading and more palpable mission of a Church system none, we presume, will deny to be that of giving scope—yes, and tone, and we may go farther and add increased volume, to those divine impulses which, born of the Spirit of God in the heart of man, move and sway and break forth from it. In the fourteenth chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians he gives certain directions respecting methods of worship. The chapter closes with these words: "Let all things be done decently and in order." Ah! that word *DONE*! Under the provisions of Church order something is to be done. Alas! that we have so fully lost sight of the *doing* in our own concern for the decency and order which are to regulate the doing. We have left out the verb in our misplaced preference for its qualifying adverbs. Better it seems to me that there should be *doing*, even if it be somewhat irregular, than that there should be nothing done. Dr. Wayland was once asked concerning a critic—the Doctor himself rather belonging to this class—is he a Christian? Dr. W, re-

plied: "Can he cast out devils?" That was all the people cared for, because it is the true test of Christianity.

It was a remark made in connection with the late Evangelical Alliance Conference, that some Christian ministers who had attended its sittings had found their old habits of exclusiveness intolerable after having tasted the unrestrained blessedness of brotherly love. This I have thought a sad testimony; sad that such excellent men should ever have been influenced by such habits of exclusiveness. But it is still a sadder remark to be told that some of them, such as Bishop Cummins, of the Reformed Episcopal church, had found it necessary "to break ecclesiastical bonds in order to live a larger Christian life." That the necessity spoken of here does not exist in the case of all church relations, even our own, is something on which we may congratulate ourselves, and on whose account we may, and ought to be devoutly thankful to God.

Still we may as well face the question which, to mark our privileges and graduate our responsibility, is certainly becoming in our time prominent and irrepressible, as to whether the views of that large-minded and large-hearted man, Thomas Binney, may now be impinged on where he tells us he "desired to see comprehended in the same religious community far greater differences of opinion and far greater varieties of ministry" than have hitherto been allowable. And why not? Who shall say that it is not a ministry of these times in which God permits us to live to illustrate and prove that the charity of the Gospel is a mightier associating, and even organizing, force than any mere "bond of opinionative coherence." May we hope that we are on the threshold of the period appointed for

this ministry? The world has been waiting wearily for this time. But divine processes are usually deliberate. There is an Arabian proverb that no man is called of God till the age of forty. It seems a long time for a man to wait. And this method of the Divine procedure has a wider application than to the individual. But the issue of these processes often burst upon an astonished generation with startling and revolutionary suddenness. Is it to be so with us in this our day? Speaking of proverbs brings me to another, an adage prevalent among the Jews, that when the tasks are multiplied it is time for Moses to appear. And in this our day have not God's children been crying to Him by reason of the fierceness of oppression, the oppression upon their hearts of evils that brotherliness of spirit and largeness of view will yet find a way to obviate? Have we no intimation in the pressure of this question upon the attention of the Church, that by some means God is about to bring deliverance to Israel? This mission of deliverance may not be embodied in individual leadership at any one geographical point. But is not our Moses to be discovered in the spirit of the age, a spirit everywhere abroad? It is under the influence of such yearnings and hopes that I for one am prepared to give a hearing to my brother from his standpoint of idiosyncrasy and education, even though I may not think he holds, in either regard, the same vantage ground with myself. As in all the royalty of assured conviction, driving in our chariot, we light on Jonadab the son of Rechab, coming to meet us, and in salutation we say to him: "Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" and he answers, "It is," shall we not give him our hand, even though he may have to bend over a little—a not ungraceful attitude

—to welcome him to our side to hold brotherly association with us, and hurry forward with us in our chariot? In seeking invitation into this higher “degree” of a practical Christianity whose password is EXCELSIOR, I am preparing myself to listen with more deference to my neighbour when he expresses his belief that the embodiment of the principles of New Testament duty lay in a definite organization, is something which has been very much “left to the operation of two factors—the inner life of the Church, and the overruling providence of God.” Further, from the tendency there is in all of us “to overlook the soul of things, and to attach ourselves exclusively to the forms in which it is expressed,” I may mistake the spirit of my brother in pronouncing it less liberal than mine.

With our hearts, and hopes directed to such diviner manifestations of a true Christian spirit, we shall do well to heed the conditions of all progress as suggested by the eccentric but forceful Carlyle where he speaks to us of “heroic toil, and silence, and endurance, such as led to the high places of the universe, and the golden mountain tops, where dwell the spirits of the dawn.”





THE POWER OF CHRIST, THE MISSION- ARY'S STRENGTH.

SERMON XXII.

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“ All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.”—Matt. xxviii, 18, 19.



THE encouraging connection between the two clauses of this text is the theme of this discourse. The word “therefore” has nowhere, even in the Book of God, more force and meaning than in this particular place. The “Great Commission” was given to the disciples under circumstances the most discouraging that can be conceived. But side by side with the command, was given an encouragement the most stimulating that could be desired. The Apostles knew before this that their Master was the promised Messiah, and that the Divine pledge had been given that He should “have dominion

from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth ;" that He should "have the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." But with regard to the homage Jesus was to receive, and the possession He was to inherit, they had entertained the most erroneous notions. They were now being undeceived. Instead of leading powerful armies and victoriously setting up His kingdom among men, Jesus was to entreat permission to establish His kingdom in the *hearts* of men. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Instead of wearing crowns and swaying sceptres as earthly princes, they, the elect twelve, were still to be servants—despised followers of the condemned Nazarene. They could have trusted in their Master had He remained with them, for they had seen His power displayed, and winds and seas, diseases and death, men and beasts, angels and devils, all implicitly obeying His commands ; but He had just been crucified as a felon, and they remembered His words, "The servant is not greater than his Lord ; if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." Now, that which encouraged these stricken men, and made a hero of each disciple as they went forth, twelve men on one side, and "all nations" on the other, was the announcement in this text, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye *therefore* and teach all nations."

The Apostles' work unfinished, and the Apostles' encouragement undiminished, have come down to us. This assertion of *power* is precisely the assurance that the Church of to-day needs to confirm her wavering faith. Many Christians are doubting. The work is so vast ! Seven hundred millions of enemies of the Gospel still in

the world ! So many and so formidable forms of idolatry and sin yet to be vanquished ! But to doubt is to ensure defeat. Unless the Church believes in victory she will never get it. She will have no zeal, no self-sacrifice, no heroism, no enthusiasm, and consequently no success. She must be inspired with the thorough conviction that it is God's purpose and her privilege to make the Gospel victorious in all lands. In order to this, she must turn from the magnitude and the difficulties of the work, to the Power on the throne. She must come back to her primitive source of inspiration, from which, at the beginning, she caught the fire that sent her blazing through the world. She must stand again with Jesus on the mount of Ascension, and hear Him say, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye *therefore* and teach all nations."

I. CONSIDER, FIRST OF ALL, THE POWER OF CHRIST AS DISPLAYED IN HIS WORKS. "All things were made by Him." Whatever He undertook He accomplished. The worlds He began to build He finished. Not one of them all was left half-formed and motionless. He gave to each of them its orbit, its laws, its light, its impulses. And now they are rolling on with unchanging course,

"Forever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine,"

"In the beginning" God began the formation of our own earth, and through the ages His mighty hand wrought upon it till it was finished. He reared the towering mountains, grooved the fertile valleys, spread abroad the green plains, gathered together the seas, and appointed them shores as He pleased, and never abandoned His work

till He had painted every flower and chiselled every leaf. And having begun the redemption of our earth from sin, His Almighty power will not fail or be discouraged till the whole earth shall be filled with His glory.

II. THE SURE FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY ILLUSTRATES THE SAME TRUTH—whatever the Redeemer undertakes, His power accomplishes. Ages may intervene, but the event infallibly justifies the prediction. Four thousand years passed away after man received the promise of a Saviour before that Saviour appeared. But Jesus came. In the fulness of time God visited and redeemed His people. Cyrus was mentioned by name on the page of prophecy 200 years before he was born ; but Cyrus came and gathered, as the Lord's shepherd, the exiled Israel.

God does not deviate from His plan in order to punish the wretches who dare oppose His power. The Antediluvians flourished 120 years after He had cursed that guilty race ; but the flood came and swept them all away. Sodom was a fertile valley long after the cry of her enormities entered the ear of the God of Heaven ; but the storm of fire came, and Sodom was a putrid lake. The Amorites were allowed 500 years to fill up the measure of their iniquities after God had promised their land to the seed of Abraham ; but though the intervening years wore away in distressing bondage, Israel did obtain the promised land.

The prophet has uttered his voice concerning the subjugation of the nations to God. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Shall this be the only prophecy unfulfilled ? In this instance alone shall God begin to build and not be able to finish ? In this enterprise alone

shall His power and wisdom fail? No! Christians have no reason to dismiss their hopes. The enemies of the cross have no reason to dismiss their fears. None may suppose that He whom they have regarded as Omnipotent, is not so after all. The kingdom of the Lord shall come, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

III. BUT BEHOLD THE POWER OF CHRIST AS MANIFESTED IN WHAT HE HAS ALREADY DONE FOR HIS CAUSE.

When we consider the past, how the encouragement increases—how our expectations brighten! In retracing the history of the Church, we find that, always when she was low, Christ raised her. Amid all the moral desolations of the old world the infant Church never was forgotten. God held the winds in His fist, and barred the fountains of the deep until Noah could build the ark and protect her from the storm. How wonderful were His interpositions when the family of Abraham embodied the Church which He intended should overspread the earth! In redeeming them from bondage in Egypt, how He opened upon that guilty land all the batteries of His power, till it was glad to thrust His people out! With the same masterly hand He conducted them to Canaan. The Red Sea divided; Jordan rolled back; the rock became a waterspring; the heavens rained them bread; their garments outwore forty years of wilderness life; and the angel of the Lord, in a cloud of light, led them through the labyrinths and dangers of the desert, till they ate of the fruits and drank of the fountains of the promised land.

In all the following centuries, and in all vicissitudes of His cause; at times when the powers of darkness had their hour, and devils were ready to shout victory—always, in

ways equally honourable to His omnipotence, He caused His people to triumph.

This would be a pleasing theme, but time would fail to tell what Jesus has done in illustrating and glorifying His Omnipotence. Every age has recorded interpositions of His power, and every land beneath the shining sun bears some monument that tells to His honor. And if He has done so much in execution of His plan, will He abandon it now? If He would float His Church above a drowning world, redeem her from bondage, escort her through the desert, reprove kings for her sake, arrest the sun to aid her victories, light up the gloom of dungeons by His smile, and cool the fires of the stake by His presence, will He forsake her now? No, no! He *will* do for Zion, if necessary, just such things as He *has* done. His cause was never nearer His heart than now. He still loves His people as He loved Joshua and David, and hates His enemies as He hated Pharaoh and Sennacherib. And His arm is not shortened. For an enslaved church He would raise up another Moses, for an apostate church another Luther, and for a sleeping church another Wesley.

IV. BEHOLD THE POWER OF THE SON OF GOD IN WHAT HE IS DOING NOW.

This is a stirring age. These are enterprising times. This is a day of heavenly exploit. The ordinary operations of the Church are accomplishing much. These have been seasons of dulness and dimness, but speaking comprehensively, the lighting up of the past half century has been delightful. A faint reflection of that apostolic light which sheds its glory on Jewish and on Gentile lands. Missionary operations are going on in every part of the world. God's word is now read in many tongues in which, until

lately, not a word of inspired truth was ever written, is traversing deserts, taming savages, and pouring celestial light into eyes which never saw its beams before.

Many of the noblest youths of Christian lands, some of them with the brightest prospects in life, are willing to forego every earthly advantage, proud of the honour of being missionaries of the cross. In engaging in His service these men of learning and strength, the Master has a great work for them to do. Asia and Africa have opened their broad fields to receive the seeds of gospel truth; the deluded victims of idolatry and superstition are waking from their sleep and shaking off their chains, and those accursed families of gods are sickening and dying from the land. He who is thus employing His messengers and servants, is also providing means for their support. Churches and congregations which, not long ago, could spare nothing for the cause of evangelism, and doled out cautiously the pittance necessary to support the gospel at home, are now laying rich gifts and sacrifices on the altar of missions. Let the pulse of Christian charity beat a little stronger, and, instead of finding men denying their ability to give for the extension of Christ's kingdom, we shall find the wealthy willing to sell houses and lands if necessary, to save the heathen from hell—and the really poor, weeping over their inability. Let benevolent enterprise increase still as it has increased recently, and God and His blessing, and 20 years would suffice to put the Bible into every language that is spoken, and send the missionary into every dark corner of earth; and 50 years would evangelize the world, tame the lion and the asp, and dot every desert with temples devoted to the Deity.

It is true that to-day Christians constitute but a fraction

of the population of the globe, yet to that fraction God has given in actual possession four of the six grand divisions of the earth. And what is more, He has given to it the wealth, the manufactures, the commerce, the learning, the art, the science, the civilization, the civil and military factors and forces which constitute national greatness and dominion. Christianity has outstripped all other religions, and, to-day, is the only aggressive religious power in the world. The false religions of the earth have been smitten with decay. The great Oriental faiths are, according to the best witnesses, crumbling away. China and India are fast reaching that condition of doubt or indifference which prevailed throughout the Roman Empire at the advent of Christianity, and prepared the way for its triumph. Paganism for 40 centuries has done its best, but results in failure. Mohammedanism has done no better. Once, in forty years, it conquered more of the world, than the Roman armies in four hundred. But now after a history of 1,260 years, it is powerless before the armies of Christendom, and can hope for no more conquests. Infidelity has done worse. With all its boastings it does not possess political jurisdiction on a single inch of territory on the face of the earth. Judaism is in trouble, and is seeking relief where alone she can find it—in the bosom of Christianity.

The great powers of the world are *Christian* powers, and are great precisely in proportion to the purity of their Christianity. Three Protestant nations lead the van. The weaker states of Christendom are those which have corrupted Christianity, claimed the Word of God, and hindered the work of Christ among men. Popery is no longer an element of civil power even in Europe. Its old fulminations no longer disturb the nations. If it spreads to this

new world it is, in great measure, to melt away. Thus all the obstacles to the spread of evangelical Protestantism are dissolving and allowing a free course to the gospel.

Consider the oppositions against which Christianity has advanced to her present position. The power of Christ has controlled them all. What turmoil of nations there has been? O! the number and cruelty of the wars that have raged! How quick the succession! Before the flame has gone out in one place, some fiend has snatched the brand from the smouldering heap and kindled a flame in another place. And so war has touched and kindled war in almost unbroken succession from the beginning until now. But in all this, righteousness has triumphed. No one knows where the flame shall burst forth next. But the Church has learned the lesson of trust in Him to whom all power belongs.

The world is unsettled, Europe especially so. Complications exist which the hoariest sagacity fails to detach. The keenest insight cannot pierce the veil of to-morrow. But one thing is certain. All power is in the hand of our victorious Emmanuel. And whether the cause of the Pope is up or down; whether the cause of royalty is up or down; the cause of God is *up*: the cause of righteousness is *up*. Straight through the criminal schemes and selfish policies of men, the purpose of God goes like lightning to its execution; consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, they are made to subserve His glorious purpose of subduing the world unto Himself. Christ is absolute sovereign on earth. There are those who think God has made this world as a man makes a watch. After he has made and fitted wheels and pinions, and levers and springs, and has set it running, and has sold it out of his shop, it is

nothing more to him. The responsibility of winding it up, cleaning it, and keeping it running devolves on the man who has bought it. So, they say, God has disposed of the world. That is not the testimony of Scripture, of fact, nor of reverent love. Their testimony is that, as a father at the head of his family, as a mother in the midst of her household, is intent on securing the welfare of each child, so God is managing and directing an administration that is full of love to His creatures and adapted to promote the best interests of each individual.

But see further how Jesus by His Almighty power has made the wrath of man to praise Him through the learned attacks which have been made by scientific men upon revelation and religion. Scarcely has science won a new trophy in the enlarging field she occupies which profane ingenuity has not seized and employed as a weapon against the truth. Men have measured the skies, counted their shining hosts, and then wrested them as arguments to disprove the agency—nay, the very being, of Him whose eternal breath kindled those wonderful fires. But still “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy work.” Men have explored the depths of the earth, broken the silence of a thousand ages, and revealed the secrets of departed worlds, and then affirmed that our globe is eternal—endeavoured to erect a material throne which should rival the throne of Jehovah. But “the testimony of the rocks,” in the language of an apostle, is: “We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” Ethnologists have studied the physical and linguistic peculiarities of men, and then declared that the Adam of the Bible cannot be the father of the human races. But physiology corroborates the Scripture, and

asserts that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men. Archæologists have appealed to antiquity, declaring that they would find among the ruins of Babylon, Nineveh, and Jerusalem, dust enough to blacken the brow of Christianity for ever. Ah ! this is an old hereditary boast ! Julian was to "conquer the Galilean," and Voltaire was to "crush the wretch." But the Galilean conquered Julian, and the Crucified One crushed Voltaire. To quote the words of William Arthur, "that Jesus, whom, less than a century ago, scientific infidelity threatened to expel from the regards of mankind, now appears enthroned on the science of the universe. Every star of the firmament sparkles in His diadem ; the whole earth dutifully presents herself as His footstool ; at that footstool all the sciences meekly bow, hail Jesus as the Light of Lights," and loyally proclaim "all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth."

But besides the opposition of that coarse, old-fashioned infidelity, there has been that of the politer scepticism which would eulogize Jesus to death just as Judas kissed Him unto death. Christianity has been attacked, not only by reckless scientific men, but by theologians and professedly religious men, by ecclesiastical "principalities and powers," by "spiritual wickedness in high" churchly "places." There have been defections from the ranks of Christ where least of all they could have been expected. Dignitaries of the church in high ecclesiastical position have been traitors. Proud banners inscribed to Christ have been allowed to droop ; nay, the banner-bearers have trailed the sacred symbol in the dust, while the scarlet ranks of evil have cheered amain. But, blessed be God, we know who will conquer ! You may have crossed

Niagara River in the little ferry-boat that plies just below the Falls. If so you have observed the confusion of the waters. No two square yards are doing the same thing. There are currents and cross-currents, and whirlpools—eddyies in every direction. It is as if, having made the fearful leap of the Falls, they knew not which way to run, and consequently were running hither and thither and every-whither. And yet there is not a single drop in all those eddying, hurrying, tumultuous waters that is not under the constant control of the nicest natural laws. And so in the moral world. God rules in the storm as well as in the calm. And men's wars, and rage, and wickedness, and passions, and avarice, and infidelities, and corrupting ambitions, and all disturbing forces of the soul are but storm-winds and storm-clouds and storm-elements of various kind under the placid hand of God. Now, if we did not know this we might be alarmed. We might run to the stern of the vessel and awaken the sleeping Christ, and cry, "Lord save us, we perish!" But we know better. Let the overburdened, wearied Master sleep. We cannot perish if He is in the vessel. "All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth."

V. BUT OBSERVE THE POWER OF CHRIST IN THE PREPARATION OF HIS INSTRUMENTS. Amidst the conflicts and oppositions, aye, *by* these very means our Lord prepares His most effective agent. Men, strong, sterling men, are not made by silk and velvet handling, but by stone and iron handling. Heroes are made as swords are made. The rough ore is thrown into the furnace and melted, thrown into another furnace and melted again, then taken out only to be thrown into another furnace seven times hotter and melted over again. It

is then put under the trip-hammer which smites it as if the thunder were kissing it. And then amidst the dust and grime of the workshop, by various batterings and raspings it becomes the polished blade that glitters in the shop window, or does its deadly work on the field of battle. St. Paul never would have been the valiant soldier of the cross he was, had he not been arraigned before magistrates and kings, stoned once almost to death, five times whipped, imprisoned times unnumbered. It was these things that made him so fearless in his Master's cause. Luther would never have been the invincible hero he became if threatening death had not confronted him at every step, if papal bulls had not been fulminated against him and flaming faggots brandished in his face. Wesley would never have become the brave evangelist he was, had he not been ridiculed at Oxford, mobbed at Walsal, excluded from the pulpits and pursued by the ecclesiastical powers of the realm. This stern discipline, it is true, claims our sympathy for those who suffered it, but it was thrice blessed of God to the preparation of those men for their glorious work.

VI. BUT LASTLY, CONSIDER OUR LORD'S SPIRITUAL POWER—His power to subdue man's stubborn will, win his worthless affections, and purify and save his guilty soul. Up to the time He spake these words there had been no such manifestations of His almighty mercy as have been frequently witnessed since. In His dying hour He performed a miracle of grace, and the hardened thief was impressed, enlightened, converted, saved ; but only one, so far as we know, of all the multitudes that surrounded Him, witnesses of His passion, and of His patience, was converted by His power. But after He had ascended to His throne, led

captivity captive, and received gifts for men, the glories of the day of Pentecost were but the beginning of wonders illustrating the mighty influence of the Son of God to prick the heart, convince the reason, convert the soul, disburden the conscience, destroy the dominion of sin, and fill the believing heart with the faith, and hope, and holiness of the Gospel. Many of *you* have felt that power. It is with you a personal experience. You know that Jesus is able to save the chief of sinners, to save him to the uttermost. You know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin—to cleanse from all unrighteousness. You remember when you were far from God, and without hope ; in sin and in the way to hell, and not more than half aware of it : but He laid His hand upon you—that hand that was nailed to the cross—and arrested your thoughtless career ; extorted the cry, “ What must I do ? ” and then answered it by His Spirit and His Truth ; imparted “ that blessed sense of guilt,” and made you feel your thralldom, and then drove Satan back to hell with his bruised head, and made you feel His freedom. Now, that power is the same almighty influence to others that it is to you. Christ crucified is the power of God unto salvation to the most heathenish of the heathen as well as to you. He is not limited to this place, nor to this land, but must be preached in all lands upon the broad face of the earth. Wherever a human foot has wandered—wherever man’s rebel will has set itself against the will of God—wherever the human mind is blinded by ignorance and superstition—wherever the heart is polluted by sin and crime, and the soul is burdened, and groaning, and perishing in despair—*there* Christ’s almighty power may be felt, giving light to the darkened, pardon to the guilty, purity

to the polluted, and righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost to every trusting spirit.

Will you go, therefore, and teach your wretched and perishing fellow-men? Will *you* go? It may be that there is some one among you upon whom God would lay His hand, and qualify and call to stand alone upon some dark foreign shore, to unfurl on some stronghold of the devil the banner of the cross. If so, a life of much toil and sacrifice would be yours; but happy is that man to whom God assigns work that would be joyfully accepted by the highest angel in the third heaven. Bright avenues of worldly prosperity may open before you, and you may refuse a commission to preach the Gospel, but others will go and have the toils, the triumphs and the rewards. "Let no man take thy crown."

Will you *pray* for the coming of Christ's kingdom? If you think it a burden to pray for the prosperity of Zion, you may refuse, but her cords shall be lengthened notwithstanding. There are those who consider the duty a privilege. If duty did not bind them to pray they would weep to be denied the favour of advocating God's cause before His throne. "Pray that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."

Will you *contribute* of your abundance for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom? You may withhold if you choose. Some happy beings will have the work and the reward. The work will go on, if not with us, then without us. The gold is His; the silver is His; and all power is His in heaven and earth. "Give, and it shall be given to you."

Will you open your own heart to Christ that He may establish His wisdom within you? If you do

not wish to be an heir of God, and live in Heaven forever, you may refuse. But the celestial choir will be full. The marriage supper of the Lamb will be furnished with guests. There will be "a great multitude whom no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," to stand before the eternal throne and sing "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." You are invited. Do not exclude yourself. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

But if any shall determine to enter into league with the enemies of the Cross and oppose the Gospel, they can do so; but the cause will prosper. They will accomplish their own ruin, not that of the Gospel. It was never before so foolish and dangerous to be an enemy of Christ as now. No opposition can be effectual. Certain disaster, discomfiture and shame await the enemies of the Cross. Men may set their faces against heaven and righteousness, and seek to make their own unrighteous wills victorious, and may think that they are succeeding, until God swings round His retributive hand and, by a stunning blow, interrupts their shout of victory and turns it into a groan of defeat.

But His strong arm is strong to save. He who could cast us down can exalt us to heaven. O may He give us guidance and grace that we may love Him and His cause, so that while we rejoice in the visible advance of His kingdom, we may have the additional gladness of knowing that we contribute something to the approach of that time when—

“From dawn to the sunset,
 Unchecked on their way,
Hosannas shall follow
 The march of the day ;”

when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.





PREACHING CHRIST.

SERMON XXIII.

By REV. HENRY POPE, JR.

PRESIDENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK AND P. E. ISLAND
CONFERENCE.

‘Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.’—COLOSSIANS i. 28.



ASTRONOMY teaches that all the planets in the solar system, with their attendant satellites, while deriving their light from the sun, concur, in obedience to an uniform law of gravitation, in doing homage to his supremacy, as the stupendous central power which controls, conserves, and harmonizes all their movements.

What the sun is in the material system in which he occupies so conspicuous a position, and exerts an influence so potent and pervading—*that*, our Lord Jesus Christ is, in the grand economy of saving truth—its central power of attraction—its life and light—according to the graphic description of the last of the Old Testament Prophets,

the "Sun of righteousness" risen upon our darkened sphere with healing in His wings. So thought St. Paul, for in his creed, experience and ministry, Christ was the "Alpha and Omega," "the Author and the Finisher," "the all and in all." Would he characterize Christian theology? He styles it "the truth as it is in Jesus." Would he describe his religious experience? He says, "Christ liveth in me." Would he avow the theme of his ministry? He declares it to be "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Through evil as well as good report, when deprived of personal liberty, as well as when with unrestricted freedom he went in and out among the churches, he ever tenaciously clung to Christ and gloried in His cross. When he wrote this Epistle he was confined in a Roman prison, where he had been cast by the Emperor Nero, solely on account of his having preached Christ. Amid the damp and dismal darkness, and the sobering solitude of his cheerless cell, does his faith falter? does his love grow cool? Verily, no! Forth from its grim walls sound out the notes of his heroic trust in God, and undying affection for his Saviour. Listen. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:" "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed—for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Under these circumstances it was that tidings reached him of the triumphs of the Gospel at Colosse—intelligence that filled him with great joy. His rejoicing, however, was moderated by the accompanying information that false teachers had crept into that

youthful Christian community, and corrupted the minds of some of its members. This state of things, appealing to his jealousy for the honour of Christ, and his love for precious souls, was the occasion of his writing this valuable epistle.

Besides the numerous and judicious counsels, suited to the peculiar condition of the Colossian believers, with which it is enriched, this letter contains a masterly vindication of the supreme dignity and divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He shows how this transcendent verity—that Christ crucified is a Divine Saviour,—constitutes the grand centre around which all other truths of the evangelical economy in beautiful harmony revolve, and hence the prominence assigned to this doctrine in the ministry of himself and his brethren in the apostleship. It is in this connection we find the words of our text:—"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom: that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

These words as we understand them, teach us what ought to be the theme, the mode, and the motive of the Christian ministry. We propose to examine the topics in the same order in which they are presented.

I. THE THEME OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

"Whom we preach," writes the Apostle. Whom did they preach? Let the immediately previous words supply the answer, "Christ in you the hope of Glory." What should ministers preach concerning Christ? If the preaching and testimony of the apostles may be their directory, then we may answer as follows:

1. *Christ is to be preached as the Son of God.*

We cannot but have observed the commanding promi-

nence given by the apostles in their writings to the doctrine of the proper, and essential divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. John testifies of Him, "This is the true God, and eternal life." St. Peter writes, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" St. James designates Him, "our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory." St. Paul declares Him to be "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"—"the Son of God:"—"the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person." In the Epistle He affirms of Him, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Contrasting the Gospel with the law of Moses, and the institutions of the Jewish Church—the apostles saw in the divinity of the Saviour it reveals, the reason of its unrivalled power, and peerless authority. Their highest impressions of the law of God were derived from the consideration that He who died on Calvary, was the Lord of life, and rich in glory—not only in the form of God, but equal with God. If such importance were attached by these inspired men to this doctrine, may we not justly assume that, in their ministry, as well as in their epistles, they would give it a very conspicuous place? When we reflect upon the relation this doctrine sustains towards the redemption economy—being to that economy what the keystone is to the arch, the foundation to the superstructure—or the soul to the body, we feel that it cannot be held with too firm a grasp. This conviction is

strengthened as we observe the undisguised efforts which are being made by theological adventurers, and self-constituted teachers of religious faiths, in this age of rationalistic heresies, and scientific oppositions, to eliminate from Christianity the Divine element which is its life, and strength and glory. The present is a period when the Christian pulpit should give no uncertain sound upon this cardinal point. With a holy indignation let us hurl back to the regions of falsehood, whence it came, the God-dishonouring lie, that Christianity is only one of a series of successively improving developments of human wisdom and virtue—to be superseded in its turn (even if it be not already superseded) by some modern expression of the liberated thought of mankind. Fearless of all successful contradiction from the words of history, the researches of philosophy, and all just interpretation of the divine oracles, may we affirm that by the Christ of the Gospel there have been revealed mysteries so sublime, and virtues so exalted, and deeds in the interest of humanity so superhuman in their physical grandeur and moral glory, achieved, as to compel our admiring faith to exclaim, “My Lord, and my God!” We point them to the vaulted heavens where through illimitable space myriads of worlds revolve; and, on the authority of the God of truth, we tell them that, among all those magnificent and brilliant orbs, there is not one which was not created, and is not upheld by Jesus Christ.

Before His advent, the Seraphim worshipped Him as the thrice holy Jehovah, the Lord of hosts—of whose glory the whole earth was even then full. When on earth, He claimed and received divine honours and worship, and now that He is once more enthroned in heaven, the

adoration of angels and men are poured forth before Him in extollation of His achievements as the Redeemer God. If a mere creature could create the vast universe, and if it be not idolatry in angels or men to offer divine worship to a created being, then we admit our error in regarding Christ as essentially and practically divine. But if reason and revelation equally denounce such assumptions as alike baseless and blasphemous (as they unquestionably do), then must Christ's own words be true, "I and My Father are one!"

2. *Christ is to be preached as the Son of man.*

The great majority of the Christian Church believe that as our Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God by an eternal generation, so He is the Son of Man by the mystery of the Incarnation. The great object of His mission to our world was our redemption. The accomplishment of this mighty purpose involved His sacrificial death. It was fitting that He should assume the nature of those whom He undertook to redeem, therefore, He took upon Him, not the nature of angels, but "the seed of Abraham." When He came into the world saying, "Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me," He adds, "but a body hast thou prepared for Me," thus referring to the supernatural provision made for His assumption of our nature, or, as another rendering of the language reads, "My ears hast thou opened," or "bored," in allusion to the ancient custom of boring the ears of servants, and harmonizing with the words of the Apostle, "He took upon Him the form of a servant," and with His own declaration, "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," or to save, "and to give His life a ransom for many."

Guided by the star of Gospel story we come to Bethlehem and find the infant Jesus, and thence follow Him along the whole career of His humiliation, and as we pass from stage to stage we are more deeply convinced of His zeal and personal humanity. Gazing upon this side of Christ's nature we are filled with humility and grateful joy. We are humbled, for it was our guilt that rendered necessary He should stoop so low as to take upon Himself a nature capable of suffering and death. We rejoice when we remember that He who stooped so low is one so high, and hence so mighty to save. For more than thirty years He sojourned upon earth, mingling among men in the true brotherhood of our humanity. His heart overflows with love, His voice was ever eloquent of peace, and His hands stretched forth to bless. The heroic love which induced Him to carry our sorrows, and acquaint Himself with our grief, reached its highest development when upon the altar of the cross He poured out His soul unto death for the transgressors. Then was His human soul riven with the fiery bolts of divine vengeance, and His human body "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." Clothed with that humanity which expired on Calvary, and was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, He had passed into the heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Too frequently is this assuring fact of our Saviour's perfect humanity, securing for us in Him a personal and kindred friend, lost sight of by His Church. This ought not to be. We are taught to remember that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and knows how to succour them that are tempted. What comfort flows from the thought,

“ He in the days of feeble flesh,
Poured out His cries and tears,
And though exalted feels afresh,
What every member bears.”

As the Son of God, His divinity gives completeness to all His mediatorial sufferings as man, whilst by virtue of His omniscience and omnipresence, He maintains in this globe the influence and helpfulness of His humanity. As “the man Christ Jesus,” He still cherishes for our race the love and sympathy of a human brother amid all their wants, and weakness, and woes ; while as the Son of God, He is able to lift them up above the reach of them all.

3. *Christ is to be preached as the Saviour of the world.*

The world needs a Saviour. Since the fatal hour of Adam’s fall in Paradise, sin, like a lawless, turbulent tyrant, has held our race in the chains of a cruel, crushing despotism. Like a virulent and loathsome disease, its empoisoning influence taints the blood of every human being. Sin is a terrible evil. Guilt and misery are its fruits in this world, and in the world to come, the bitter pains of eternal death. “O sin,” exclaims one, “how hast thou curst us ! Thou hast thrown up a barrier between us and God, with thy chilling breath thou hast extinguished the light of our household joys, thou hast unstrung our harp, and filled the air with discordant cries, thou hast unsheathed the sword, and bathed it in human blood, thou hast dug every grave in the bosom of the fair earth ; but for thee we should not have known the name of widow or orphan, tear and sigh, sorrow and death ; but for thee our hearts had been untorn by a pang, and our joy pure as the ecstasies of heaven !” The cry of humanity in every age has been substantially, “O

wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "What must I do to be saved?"

To these inquiries, interesting beyond all possible expression, the echoes of Christ's voice, lingering in the record of this Book, furnish the only life-inspiring response. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Jesus Christ is the Balm and Physician at Gilead, the Fountain opened, the True Bethesda. Sound it out East and West, North and South, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Tell the plague-spotted millions "that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Let them know that "He tasted death for every man." Proclaim Him the only and all sufficient Saviour! Countless multitudes in all ages have been trying one expedient after another, to roll back the overwhelming tide of evil, to throw off the deadly incubus of sin, to extinguish the hell-fire of a guilty conscience, to force the bolts of the dire poison of the soul, and free themselves from the shackles of satanic servitude, but have tried in vain. Let them know that Christ is the God-appointed Saviour, and invested with all power in heaven and earth, is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. He who of old parted the sea and divided the Jordan, can avert and control the mightiest floods of moral evil,

and command the waves of Heaven's anger that they turn not to drown the helpless soul of humanity. From the wounded side of Jesus flows the river of the water of life, which alone can quench the flames of guilt in the soul, cleanse from the impurity of sin, and make our earth once more an Eden for life and beauty. Let but the cry of a penitent sinner, uttered in faith, reach His ear, and there is not a moral dungeon which He cannot force, nor a chain which He cannot break. He can comfort and aid, guide and guard His people all along their path through life, and He will be with and save them in death. Having abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, He hath issued the proclamation, "I am the resurrection and the life." He will convey the disembodied spirits of all who die in Him to His Father's house, where they shall see His glory and share His heaven. In due time he will wake their guarded dust from the slumber of mortality, and having clothed it with immortal life and beauty, make each glowing body the shrine of a glorified spirit, and so shall they "ever be with the Lord."

4. *Christ must be preached as the Judge of the quick and the dead.*

The various dispensations of the divine government under which men have been placed have all been probationary. That under which we are privileged to live is the last of such dispensations. To it is destined to succeed the age of retribution. When the Gospel shall have been preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations, then shall the end come. All the ages of human history, prior to that eventful crisis, will have served as the seed-time, and summer of the moral development of our race,

“The harvest is the end of the world.” Over all these ages, with the generations of men whose lives they shall have measured, the mediatorial sway of Christ as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” shall have extended. In the end of the world, He shall deliver up this mediatorial Kingdom to God even the Father—and robing Himself with judicial majesty, descend in the clouds of heaven to judge the entire race of mankind. Then shall be heard the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God, quickening the dead, transforming the living, and summoning all before the flaming tribunal. “Then the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” Thus signalized shall dawn that day for which all other days were made. Time shall be no longer. The reign of eternity shall begin. Clothed with power and great glory, Christ shall be seated upon the throne of His glory. Before Him shall be gathered all nations. In one vast assembly all the kindreds, tribes and tongues and people shall mingle. Idolators and Turks, Jews and Mahommedans, Christians and Infidels shall compose one promiscuous concourse. The wise man and the fool, the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the king and his subject, the slave and his master, the husband, the wife, the parent and the child, the pastor and the people, the young and the old, the saint and the sinner, mankind and devils, shall all be marshalled there. You will be there, I shall be there, we shall each be recognised by the Judge, and every one answer for himself. The judgment shall be set, and the books opened.

In recognition of His services as the Mediatorial King

under whose government the world of the redeemed has been placed, the Lord Jesus Christ is delegated by the everlasting Father to execute the duties of the supremely momentous office of Judge on this august occasion. As God-man He will be peculiarly qualified for this high position. What attributes other than those which pertain to Deity alone would be adequate for the business of this solemn assize? On the other hand, how it will assure the confidence, and enhance the joys of the saints to be judged by Him to whom they owe all their preparation for this tremendous crisis : and how infinitely it will aggravate the guilt, and justify the punishment of the wicked, that He who shall condemn them will be none other than He who died to deliver them from the wrath to come.

“Behold,” he saith, “I come quickly.” “Be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.”

In our text we have indicated to us,

II. THE MODE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

I. “*Warning every man.*”

This language imports danger. The apostles warned men because they believed them to be in danger. So vividly was this peril seen by those holy men, that it wrought upon their sensibilities and constrained them

“To seek the wandering souls of men
With cries, entreaties, tears to save—
To snatch them from the gaping grave.”

Addressing the elders at Ephesus, Saint Paul said :
“Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears !”

“But knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade

men," he writes to the Corinthians. They believed and taught that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." They thus warned men of the wrath to come, and exhorted them to flee for refuge to Christ. Not with unfeeling spirit and revolting harshness of expression; but with unaffected tears did they declare the alarming truth to every man irrespective of country, class, or creed. They knew that every man was in danger, and believed that every man who should take warning might deliver his soul.

How men can read the discourses of Christ and the writings of the apostles; and, if they believe in the truth of the Bible, not believe in the existence of a personal devil, and a material hell, I cannot understand. But such is the case—the theological wiseacres of the nineteenth century have ruled that there is neither the one nor the other. Christ and His apostles warned men against the devil, and against the torments of hell. We presume they at least knew as much concerning this subject as Tom Paine, Theodore Parker, Renan, or any other of the entire school of Freethinkers.

Unless we are better advised than by such impious cavillers, we shall feel bound to warn our fellows to be sober and vigilant, because their "adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Still must we echo the warnings of Christ in the ears of the Pharisees and evil doers of modern times: "Ye ser-

pents ! Ye generation of vipers ! how can ye escape the damnation of hell ? ” and affirm with Him that, if they repent not they shall perish—they shall die in their sins, and go away into everlasting punishment. It is at the peril of our own souls that we fail to bear this testimony, seeing that the Divine Master holds us responsible for the results of our unfaithfulness. To us He speaks, as well as to Ezekiel, saying, “O son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die : if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”

The law of Moses had its frowning Sinai, capped with thunder clouds shooting forth their bolts of fire, symbolical of the terrible majesty of the Lawgiver, and suggestive of His power to punish the trifler and the rebel ; but no threatenings of condemnation and wrath can compare with those written in the redemptive blood of Calvary. “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing ; and hath done despite to the spirit of grace ? ” Not only are sinners exposed to the vengeance of eternal fire, but their danger is heightened by their gross insensibility to the awful fact. Drugged with the narcotics of infidelity, or stupified by the gluttonous indulgence of sensual appetites, they sleep a deadly sleep, and need to be aroused by the peals of terror and alarm hung out from the belfry of the Christian Pulpit.

2. "*Teaching every man.*"

The chief function of the ministerial office is to teach men the way of salvation. On this subject mankind are deplorably ignorant. They must needs have "line upon line and precept upon precept." The teaching of the Christian minister is not speculative but declaratory. His business is not to deal in the conjectural and abstruse, but with the changeless realities, the eternal truths—the immutable and clearly defined principles of divine revelation. His utterances are authoritative only so far as they consist with the only Text Book on the science of salvation—the Holy Bible.

" The author God Himself,
The subject God and man, salvation, life,
And death—eternal life, eternal death.
Dread words whose meaning has no end, no bounds.
Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire
To man this Book contains ; defines the bounds
To vice and virtue, and of life and death,"

"The truth as it is in Jesus," is the staple of the Christian teacher. That truth embodies the law which determines the nature and defines the limits of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, vice and virtue, good and evil. That truth reveals the only way by which the spiritually dead may be quickened, the guilty pardoned, the vile cleansed. The sufficiency of Christ to satisfy the wants and fill up the entire mental and moral capacity of every human soul in which He dwells, constitutes the riches of the glory of this mystery, "which is Christ in you the hope of glory."

With a tone of authority, inspired by the conviction of the absolute truth of his message, and of his divine call

to proclaim it, the true minister will fearlessly appeal to every man's conscience. His is the noble dogmatism which will ever characterize the teacher who communicates truths in which he thoroughly believes. Nor will such a ministry lack the power to stimulate the intellect, cultivate the fancy, and answer the demands of man's emotional nature. The Cross of Christ is the luminous centre of the triple universe of morals, mind, and matter, and therefore, Creation and Providence, history and science, philosophy and literature. Poetry and art, heaven, earth and hell, may be legitimately ransacked for imagery to illustrate and enforce its mighty interests and far-reaching claims.

3. "*With all wisdom.*"

The divine plan of salvation revealed in the Gospel contains in itself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The first teachers of this sublime mystery exhibited a great deal of practical wisdom in the fulfilment of their responsible work. Contemplating their mission in its physical and moral magnitude, they were constrained to inquire, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Old faiths and ancient philosophies had to be assailed and overcome. By the prejudices of unreasonable men, the cruel desertion of false brethren, and various other forms of opposition, did Satan strive to hinder them. Ofttimes had they occasion to recall the words of the Master, "Be ye wise as serpents, harmless as doves." Fearful lest their mission should fail of success through any indiscretion or mismanagement on their part, they were wont to cast themselves upon the sympathy of the Church, earnestly desiring that prayer might be made in their behalf, "that the word of the Lord might have free course, and

be glorified." Nor was divine aid sought in vain. God gave unto them "the spirit of power and love, and of a sound mind." So far as was consistent with loyalty to Christ and His truth, they were made all things to all men, that they might by all means save some. Did their zeal glow with unabated ardour? It was always according to knowledge. "Giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed." Contending earnestly for "the faith once delivered to the saints." So fought they, not as those who (missing their antagonist) beat the air; every blow which these skilful champions delivered took effect. Guided by the wisdom which is profitable to direct, they did not rashly rush into danger, neither did they cast their pearls before swine. That modesty which is ever the distinguishing mark and crowning glory of true greatness, either of the intellect or the heart, forbade vain confidence in their own qualities and attainments, while their discourse and demeanour were eminently characterized "by the meekness of wisdom." They saw men everywhere, under the woful infatuation of error and evil, rushing on to the dismal shades of eternal death; and feeling themselves entrusted of God with the only means of their salvation, they studied, and sought, and prayed for the best way of discharging their solemn obligation. All their resources of genius and experience were placed under contribution in this responsible service. They were wide awake, and closely observant of men and things; and, while as the means of their own salvation, and that of a world perishing in sin, they were "determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," in order that all men might be brought to this mighty Saviour, they would know everything and employ every circumstance likely to afford them any aid.

Next to the spiritual qualifications of the Christian minister for the present day, the question of educational training for the sacred office demands the enlightened consideration and liberal support of the religious public. The age is rife with change. Old landmarks in morals, philosophy and religion are sought to be removed. They, who are expected to stand for the defence of the God-honored Gospel of our fathers, must needs be "able ministers," so fully equipped as to be competent to meet the enemies of the faith wherever they may be entrenched, whether it may be in the department of historic and classic lore, or in the heights, or depths of physical, mental, or moral science, and in every place triumphantly plant the glorious banner of bible truth.

We shall now pass on to observe.

III. THE MOTIVE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

This is stated in these words, viz., "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." From this we learn two facts.

1. *The apostles desired the perfection of their hearers.*

The religion of Jesus Christ is the only true elevator of sin-degraded humanity. For ages mankind have groaned by reason of the bondage imposed upon them by the despotic power of sin. Ever and anon they have shouted the praises, and urged the claims of some new-found Moses, who was to bring them out of Egypt. Now it has been one creed, then another—now this form of government, then that. "Civilize!" has shouted one party—"Educate!" has cried another. Meanwhile the world's condition under their treatment has exhibited no material improvement. And thus it must ever have continued, had not Christianity been divinely instituted. The lofty

type of character to which it proposes to elevate its subjects, is "in Christ Jesus." Under its transforming and soul-expanding power, "men are to come to a perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Through faith in Christ they are, by the Divine Spirit, to be raised into newness of life, and being thereby nourished and strengthened with all might in the inner man, grow up into Him in all things. Sin has occasioned all the physical, intellectual and moral degeneration of our race, but Christ is the Saviour from sin. He teaches how men may escape from the grasp of those vices, and errors and superstitions, which are incompatible with a perfect manhood—vices which destroy the body—errors which enfeeble the mind, and superstitions which debase and disappoint the soul. How intolerant is the teaching of the Gospel of all abuse of our corporeal powers! How high the dignity with which it invests the human body, when it asks, "What? know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" The virtues it enjoins, whenever practised, are designed and suited to promote individual and social health and happiness, wealth and honour. The sublime verities it reveals, and the wide fields for thought and research which it suggestively opens, will afford the means of intellectual growth and moral improvement through the interminable hereafter of our being. Under its auspices the world must advance to the universal enjoyment of the highest civilization. Learning, science, art and commerce shed their manifold blessings upon all nations dwelling within the sphere of its benign influence.

The highest plane of perfection, however, to which it lifts men in this life—is not reached until they realize that

exalted fellowship with God of which St. John writes. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." For this same spiritual completeness, St. Paul prays on behalf of Hebrew Christians. "Now the God of peace, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight." In a word, this Gospel proclaims an indwelling Christ, and an indwelling Christ means the extirpation of all indwelling sin. Nor is this a display of divine ability in which only a few are called to participate. The apostles believed it was open for all, and therefore they warned every man, and taught every man, that they might "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Surely the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who is able to save unto the uttermost one member of the race—is able to save all; and if He be no respecter of persons (as we are assured He is not), then He must be as willing as He is able to lift every man up to the enjoyment of this infinite good.

2. *The apostles coveted the honour and happiness of presenting their hearers to Christ in the day of judgment, as the trophies of His power to save, and as the fruit of their ministry.*

These holy men seemed to live and move—to speak and act, in all their relations to the Church of Christ, as in the light of eternity, and in view of the solemn scrutiny of eternal judgment. They watched for souls, as those that must give account. Anticipating the period when Christ "shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all that believe," they toiled with unremitting diligence to win souls for Him that should swell the spoils

of His victory, and add jewels to His mediatorial crown. Nor were they dead to the holy ambition which is impatient of failure and defeat in the service of Christ. They deprecated the possibility that the disclosures of the last day should prove that in any instance they had run in vain, or laboured in vain. Rejoicing with a hallowed delight over those whom they had instrumentally saved, they exhorted them as their "joy and crown" to stand fast in the Lord, saying, "For what is our hope, or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ? For ye are our glory and joy." As spiritual husbandmen, they went forth weeping, bearing precious seed; sowing beside all waters, looking toward the harvest-time when they should come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. O my brethren! next to the honour and happiness of being ourselves presented to Christ in that day as monuments of His power to save, will be the glory and joy of presenting others as the fruit of our Christian effort! Contrasted with the high distinction attained by those who, having turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever—the proudest coronets of earth and the noblest honours of statesmen and heroes shall sink into the shades of an eternal oblivion! How solemnly startling the thought that we are speaking and hearing and acting every day for eternity, and the moral culture bestowed by others upon us, or bestowed by us upon others, will prove either "the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death!" The day hastens which shall declare the result of all!

My dear brethren! in prospect of that approaching review, allow me to ask, "Have you tested for yourselves

the saving ability of the Christ whom we preach unto you?" Is Christ in you, your hope of glory? If so, are you seeking to be made perfect in every good work to do His will? Stop not short of full salvation. Give all diligence in your Master's service, that when He shall come to judge the race, ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless, and be presented "faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy."

Do I address any who are yet unsaved? Once more I warn you to flee unto Christ. As the Saviour of sinners. He now invites you to come to Him for pardon, purity, rest and heaven. O do not longer slight His wooing love! No longer despise His beseeching grace! By His peerless divinity, and perfect humanity, His spotless life and all-atoning death—by His resurrection from the dead, and present intercession for you in heaven—and by His coming again to judge mankind—I appeal to you that you embrace His offered salvation, and thus prepare for an honourable presentation in that day, when He shall see in the millions of His redeemed, regenerate, and glorified saints—the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.

My dear brethren, there are millions of mankind to whom Christ has never yet been preached! For them as well as for us, He bore the Cross! To those of us who have accepted Him as our Saviour, He is saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!"

Though there may be but few of our number to whom it may be given to carry this message to those who without it must perish, let us rejoice that it is the privilege of all to go by their representatives, in the person of those self-denying and devoted servants of Christ, the Christian

missionaries of the day, and tell them "the old, old story, of Jesus and His love." More intimately and practically identifying ourselves with the cause of Christian Missions, in sympathy, prayer, and consecration of time and property—let all our co-operation take its character from the just and inspiring sentiment, "Christ for the world, and the world for Christ." Then shall we accelerate the arrival of that golden age of Christian triumph, when Christ "shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth."





SOME DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF WESLEYAN THEOLOGY.

AN ADDRESS

*Delivered in the Centenary Church, Hamilton, on the
Evening of Friday, June 5th, 1874.*

On the occasion of the reception of twenty-six young men into the
Ministry of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada.*

BY REV. A. SUTHERLAND.



AFTER a brief reference to the emotions excited by the remembrance of his own reception into full connection with the Conference, just fifteen years before, the speaker said:— It is not surprising that deep emotion should fill our hearts to-night. It would be strange if it were otherwise. Such a scene and such an occasion might well stir a tide of holy feeling in the coldest heart. Memory and hope blend their hues in the bow of peace that now spans the heavens above us. Gratitude for the past, joy in the present, and hope for the future, all conspire to fill the soul with delightful emotion.

* The address is given here as *prepared*; some paragraphs were omitted in the delivery from want of time.

We think of the time, not far past, when our whole Conference did not exceed the number of men we now receive into full connection, and we say, "What hath God wrought?" We recall the heroic age of Methodism, when men of whom the world was not worthy carried her banners, and vindicated her theology against a world in arms. We think of the standard-bearers who have fallen, and memory lingers with loving reverence on the names of James Evans, that man of seraphic fervour and saintly life, whose name, to this day, is "as ointment poured forth" among the red men of the North-West; and William Case, the man of executive power and of apostolic zeal, whose Christ-like sympathies reached out to those for whose souls, at that day, no man cared; and Joseph Stinson, the wise administrator and genial friend, whose incessant labours in the presidency carried him away from us all too soon; and Henry Wilkinson, whose burning soul left behind him, wherever he went, a trail of revival fire, and whose mighty pulpit appeals are still a tradition all over this land. And as we recall the names of those devoted men, we rejoice to believe that they stand to-night amongst the "cloud of witnesses," watching, with ever-deepening interest, the great conflict of the ages, and rejoicing together as each new battalion marches to the front.

But while our hearts swell with gratitude at the memory of those golden days, the question springs instinctively to the lip, "Will they continue? Will the days to come be as glorious as the days that are past? The fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?" Yes, thank God, they do! They live again in the memory of their heroic deeds, and that memory is an inspiration yet; they live in the influence of their saintly lives: the

"box of very precious ointment," shattered in the strife, spreads its fragrance yet wider through the world; best of all, they live again in the "sons of the prophets," who at the call of the Spirit and the Church fill up from year to year the ranks of the living witnesses. "Instead of the fathers" are "the children," "children that will not lie," children who will not be recreant to their high trust, children who will add yet brighter lustre to the honoured name they bear. Those whom we propose to set apart at this time to the work, have already made good proof of their ministry. May it be said of each, as he goes forth in the strength of the Lord, "The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."

The preceding speaker hath shown us what a minister ought to be—has given, in fact, a sketch of the ideal Christian minister. I wish now to speak of the peculiar advantages afforded by the Methodist Church to those who aspire after this lofty ideal, and desire to make full proof of their ministry.

In the first place, there are *the encouragements and facilities which it affords for the most liberal mental culture*. I make this remark now, because the attitude of Methodism, in this respect, has been grossly misunderstood. We have been represented as indifferent, if not antagonistic, to thorough mental culture. Such a representation is most unjust. Education has no truer friend than the Methodist Church. In the work of higher education she was the pioneer in this Dominion, and for many years she has maintained against powerful opposition, and amid many discouragements, a University which, as regards the thoroughness of the training it affords, is not surpassed by any University on this continent. And if additional evidence

of the interest which the Methodist Church takes in education were wanted, we have it in the fact that she has given to Canada the man who planned and established, and has lately perfected, a national system of education unsurpassed, if indeed it is equalled, by any other system in the world. Then in regard to the training of the ministry ; it is true that, until recently, Methodism has not had, in this country, regular established schools of theology ; but it must not be inferred that, therefore, this highly important matter has been neglected. From the first her method has been to train young men not *for* the ministry, but *in* it ; and her curriculum for probationers, extending over a period of four years, is one which even a divinity school need not blush to own. Every candidate who seeks admission to our ministry, may count upon abundant opportunities for all the culture he desires.

These young brethren are entering the ministry of *a church that was not established in antagonism to any previously existing religious body*. There are few churches of which this can be affirmed. The Lutheran Church was organized in antagonism to Popery, and the same is true of the Calvinistic Churches of France and Switzerland, and of the Reformed Church of England ; Presbyterianism was organized in antagonism to both Popery and prelacy ; Independency in antagonism to prelacy, Presbyterianism and a State Church. Of Methodism—(I had almost said of Methodism *alone*)—it can be said that it was organized in antagonism to nothing but sin. From the very first its distinguishing motto has been, “The friend of all—the enemy of none.” Its mission has not been so much to protest against error as to witness for the truth. A few moments’ reflection will show what a powerful advantage

this must give in evangelistic work. We have no quarrel with other churches as such ; our aim and mission is to spread scriptural holiness, and to bring lost sinners to God. We fight against nothing but sin. On the other hand, a church whose main business is to protest against error, will be very likely, sooner or later, to fall into error itself. The reason is this : a revolt from error does not necessarily lead towards the truth—it may only lead into some opposite extreme, or even into some form of error still worse. Thus not a few, like the father of John Stuart Mill, in their recoil from the more repulsive dogmas of Augustinianism, have landed in infidelity and atheism ; while others, starting from the same point, and impelled by the same revulsion of feeling, have leaped at a bound from particular election to universal salvation. In the present day we have an instance of another kind. Not many years ago ■ number of men joined themselves together in Christian fellowship on the principle that their chief business was to witness against error, especially against sects and creeds. They have ended by adopting the narrowest creed in Christendom, and establishing the most sectarian sect of all. I do not say that I think it wrong to protest against error. I only wish to point out that a church which makes that its chief business is in danger of falling back to the very point from which it started. We need not be surprised at this. In protesting against error we feel the force of repulsion ; in witnessing for the truth we feel the force of attraction, and the force of attraction, in the moral sphere, is the mightier of the two. The church which only protests against error is like the man who walks backward from a repulsive object ; he may unexpectedly fall into a pit. The church

which bears witness for the truth is like a man who walks with steady footsteps towards the "light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Besides this, the force of repulsion is soon expended; a reaction sets in, and it sometimes happens in this, as in other things, that the reaction is equal to the original impulse. A painful illustration of this we see in the present day, in the case of those who, as some one has wittily remarked—

"Nightly pitch their moving tent
A day's march nearer *Rome!*"

Methodism, I repeat, did not originate in a spirit of antagonism to the peculiarities or the errors of existing churches: it grew out of that overmastering desire which God implanted in the hearts of a few "to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." When these men had found rest and safety for their own souls, their deepest sympathies were stirred by the spiritual destitution everywhere apparent. Immediately they conferred not with flesh and blood; but, constrained by the love of Christ, they went out into the highways and hedges to compel men to come in to the gospel feast. Out of that divine impulse grew the Methodist Church; and hence its theology is not a traditional formula, blindly held, nor yet a combative creed, bristling all over with defiant challenges to other systems: it is a simple statement of truths discovered in the patient study of the Scriptures, and tested in the crucible of experience.

These young men are called to preach *a theology clearly defined and heartily believed*. A very curious circumstance in the ecclesiastical history of the last century is the uniformity with which other churches have ignored the

existence of a clearly defined Methodist theology. The most cursory reader of church history knows that for more than a century the Methodist Church has stood forth the acknowledged champion of the Arminian system, and yet nothing is more common than to hear the Methodist ministry spoken of as a ministry without education and without a theology. One might have expected that the fierce polemical encounters of bygone days would have dispelled this delusion ; but even when the Calvinistic Goliath reeled and staggered under the herculean blows of the Arminian David, it affected to regard the latter as a crude heresy, rather than a clearly defined system. This curious misconception is not altogether a thing of the past. In an article published just one year ago in an *American Review*, by a leading American divine, I find such statements as these : "The Methodist Church is rapidly becoming a theological power in the land, but its distinctive work, until of late, has been its practical work of Christian aggression. . . . Having performed these labours." it has "lately entered upon others, organizing colleges and theological schools." . . . Its "time has come to issue commentaries, to produce theological tomes, to compact into printed forms" its "system of belief, and logically to show its relations to, and its differences from, the theologies of other churches." Nothing could be wider of the mark than such statements. From the very first Methodism has had its theology, compact, symmetrical, and clearly defined. The men who, in the providence of God, led the movement, were men of wide culture, who had devoted long years to the patient study of the best of all theologies—the sacred Scriptures. It was this training that enables them, in all their teaching,

to give forth a certain sound. And I hesitate not to aver that the best read men of their age, especially in biblical and practical theology, were the Methodist preachers of a hundred years ago. It could hardly be otherwise ; for while divinity students in colleges were pondering theories of spiritual warfare, the Methodist itinerants were testing their doctrines in the tented field, amid embattled foes. The result was a clearness of apprehension and a distinctness of definition not likely to be attained by those who stood aloof from the strife. Let it not be thought, however, that the theology of Methodism has been gradually accumulating through the years.

If there has been an increase it has not been by accretion from without, but by the healthful development of a life within. Methodism did not go forth to the conflict blindly groping her way, and picking up her armour piece by piece : she sprang forth like Minerva from the head of Jupiter, fully armed for the fight. Methodism, I repeat, has now, and always has had, a theology ; not fragmentary, but complete ; not loosely compiled, but “ firmly compacted by that which every joint supplieth ; ” not dimly perceived, but clearly apprehended ; not carelessly held, but firmly grasped. Neither does she walk to day in an armour that has not been proved. It has been brought to the crucial test of a hundred battle fields, and has come forth as armour of proof. The best evidence of this is the fact that Methodism still holds every foot of territory she has conquered, and marches on, stronger than ever, to claim the world for Christ. And this theology, so clearly defined and apprehended, we most heartily and unwaveringly believe. The tendency of the age is towards utter laxity of opinion in regard to religious truth. It is quite possible

to have a creed without faith—a theology without belief. Thus we have sometimes the sad spectacle of creeds and confessions and church assemblies holding, with a strangely tenacious clasp, the dead body of a theology in which men have no longer a living faith. Most heartily do I sympathize with a remark attributed to the Rev. Charles Spurgeon, who, referring to this laxity of belief said, “Whether it be Calvinism or Arminianism, in God’s name let us believe *something*.”

Again, these young brethren are to preach *a theology the definitions of which are in perfect harmony with Bible statements*. This may sound like an idle boast, but a little examination will show its entire correctness. Some of the prominent theologies of the day can be maintained only by explaining away vast numbers of Scripture texts. Thus for example, Augustinianism has to explain away all those passages—and their name is legion—which assert or imply universal redemption; Unitarianism must explain away every passage which sets forth the deity of Jesus Christ; and Universalism must get rid, by an ingenious perversion of the principles of interpretation, of those texts which teach future and eternal punishment. On the other hand I know of no text, bearing upon matters of doctrine, which a Wesleyan theologian cannot accept, in its legitimate connection, just as it stands, or to the test of which he would hesitate to bring his doctrinal definitions. I say “legitimate connection,” because by isolating a text you can make it teach almost anything. And should there be a text the meaning of which, even in its proper connection, seems doubtful, then we make our appeal “to the law and to the testimony,” and claim the right of interpreting Scripture by Scripture. It is no small

boon to have a theology the definitions of which are interchangeable with Bible statements.

Take, for example, the doctrine of Repentance. I do not mean to say that repentance, as an element in our creed, is peculiar to Wesleyan theology ; but I do mean that, as regards a clear apprehension of the doctrine, and its relative position in the system, there are distinctive peculiarities. In some theologies repentance is merely a change of mind—a wishing that something were undone that has been done. In others it is merely a reformation of manners—a turning from certain sins—because of the hurt they have done, or are likely to do, as a malefactor repents of his crime because it brings him to punishment. The Wesleyan theology has always held and contended for what is called the evangelical view, and its definition is so clear and simple that even a child may understand it. “Repentance is a godly sorrow wrought in the heart of a sinful person by the Word and Spirit of God, whereby, from a sense of his sin as offensive to God, and defiling and endangering to his own soul, and from an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, he, with grief and hatred of all his known sins, turns from them to God as his Saviour and Lord.” And then as to the relative place of the experience represented by the doctrine in order of time : the Augustinian theology represents it as a habit of mind resulting from conversion, and, of course, subsequent to justifying faith ;—in other words, that a man does not repent in order to justification, but because he is justified. The Wesleyan theology represents it as a work of the Holy Spirit antecedent to conversion, and essential to it ; a view which not only harmonizes with the statements of Scripture, but accords with the facts of human experience.

Take again the distinct statement and testimony of Wesleyan theology concerning the Witness of the Spirit. In some systems we read of "Hope," and the "Assurance of Hope;" sometimes it is called the "Assurance of Faith," but in the definitions which have come under my notice, there is great confusion of thought and indistinctness of statement, the assurance of faith, or that evidence which a strong faith supplies, being confounded with the witness of the Spirit. In contrast with this ambiguity of expression is the Wesleyan definition of the doctrine, which declares it to be "an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses with my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

Again, look at its testimony concerning the doctrine and experience of entire Sanctification or perfect love. The definition given to the Calvinistic standards is that Sanctification is "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness." This agrees very closely with the Wesleyan definition of Regeneration, which describes it as "that great change which God works in the soul, when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness;" or, "the change wrought in the whole soul by the Almighty, when it is created anew in Christ Jesus, when it is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness." It seems, therefore, that what Calvinistic divines regard as Sanctification, Wesleyan theologies regard as Regeneration; in which, however, Sanc-

tification is begun. But we teach that there is a state described in Scripture which lies beyond the experience of Regeneration, and we define it to be "the state of being entirely cleansed from sin, so as to love God with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves." This is the truth to which, above all others, God has called us to bear testimony. He raised us up to spread Scriptural holiness; and our success in evangelistic work has always been measured by our fidelity in proclaiming a full salvation. Hitherto the watchmen have given, on this point, no uncertain sound. In this may it be *semper eadem*.

The relative order of the doctrines composing a system is a matter of considerable importance. If we try to change or reverse any process of God in nature, serious evils will result, and the same is true when we change or reverse God's order in redemption. In the Calvinistic system the relative order seems to be conversion, faith, repentance; an order which does not seem to us to harmonize with the statements of Scripture, and which we know does not accord with the facts of experience. In the Wesleyan system, and in perfect harmony with its doctrine of the Atonement, the relative order is, repentance—(including conviction)—faith, justification, regeneration. This arrangement, we believe, harmonizes both with Scripture and experience. We know, as matter of fact, that no man will seek the Saviour who is not convinced of sin; "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." It is equally plain that no man can exercise justifying faith in Christ, while he is yet impenitent, much less will God pardon an impenitent soul. We hold, therefore, that repentance, which is a grace of the Spirit, comes first

in order of time ; that it is the penitent soul alone who is enabled to believe in Jesus ; that a man is justified because he believes in Jesus,—not he believes because he is justified ; and that regeneration, in order of thought, follows justification.

Now, let it be observed that “all the doctrinal affirmations of Wesleyan theology are *direct spiritual forces in the conversion of souls and their upbuilding in holiness*. It is said of the celebrated Dr. Nettleton that he used to postpone his doctrinal sermons till the end of a revival. No Methodist preacher needs do this. Every true Methodist sermon is the preaching of a Methodist doctrine, and tells directly on the conversion of sinners and the perfecting of saints. Thus the doctrine of free will (disburdened of necessity or predestination) flings all the responsibility of sin on the sinner ; the doctrine of unlimited atonement (disburdened of partial reprobation) opens free salvation for all ; the doctrine of gracious ability encourages and brings the sinner to faith ; the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit leads the convert to communion with God ; the doctrine of possible apostacy warns him to maintain the constant assurance of a *present* salvation ; while the doctrine of entire sanctification inspires him to whole souled effort for the attainment of every height of holiness.” —*Dr. Whedon*. And because these doctrines harmonize with Scripture and experience, and because they are direct spiritual forces in the conversion and sanctification of men, therefore do they meet the deepest needs of the human soul. Those needs are absolute. To us they are not matters of opinion—they are profound realities ; it is this which, in our view, invests the doctrines of the gospel with such supreme importance.

Lastly, *in the theological system of Methodism there is perfect unity.* There is no clashing—no conflict. Here is no reprobation clashing with redemption ; no secret decree to conflict with the universal offer of salvation ; no collision of foreordination with free agency and responsibility ; no such view of sin as limits the power of grace, and renders the hope of deliverance a nullity. When candidly surveyed the doctrines of Methodism will be found not only in harmony with Scripture, but in harmony with one another ; each fitting into its appropriate place like jewels in a well constructed Mosaic, while upon the central jewel he who runs may read the inscription, “Holiness to the Lord.” This unity and simplicity of doctrine is felt throughout the whole of Methodism. Lord Chatham once said that “the English Church had a Popish liturgy, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy. May it not be said that there are churches in the present day who have a Calvinistic creed, a semi-Calvinistic ministry, and an Arminian laity ? Thank God there are no such discrepancies between Methodist theology and Methodist belief, but entire unity of creed and faith throughout the whole church. Among the most remarkable discoveries of modern science are those which centre in the unity of the physical universe. There are certain powers in nature to which we apply the generic term of Force. Thus heat is force, light is force, electricity is force, magnetism is force ; and the grandest discovery of the age is that these forces are mutually convertible—that they can pass into one another—or, in other words, that all force is the same force. Thus the doctrine of unity is rising with overpowering magnificence, bearing us on directly to the mind of God ; and leading us to identify

force, in all its forms, with one omnipresent and all-pervading Will. Again, in the unity of the physical world we observe a regularly ascending scale from lower to higher and still higher forms, and that all tend towards one point. There is a gradation in vegetable forms, some being but a brief step from the earthly substances on which they feed, while others approach so closely to the lower forms of animal life that it is not easy to tell just where the one ends and the other begins. Then we pass upward through graduated forms of animal life till we reach the crowning point in the exquisite structure of the human frame. Still higher there are forces—as magnetism and electricity—so etherial, so subtile that we almost hesitate to class them with material things. We pass over another interval (how great or how little we cannot tell) and we reach the domain of Mind—Intelligence. It needs but another step, and we rise to the conception of an Infinite Mind, an Infinite Intelligence, and again find the centre of unity in God. Now, if there be this wondrous unity in the physical creation, and the centre of that unity be God, is it unreasonable to expect a similar unity in the doctrines of revelation, or to suppose that the keystone of that unity will be found in the doctrine that lifts us nearest to God? Every theology has its special doctrinal standpoint from which it surveys the whole system of correlated truth, and this standpoint will go far to determine whether entire unity shall pervade the system. Thus, to borrow the thought of a late writer, Calvinism is a survey of Christian doctrine from the standpoint of Judaism; Lutheranism is a survey of Christian doctrine from the standpoint of justification by faith; Wesleyanism is a survey of Christian doctrine from the standpoint of perfect

love. It is this which gives such unity to the Wesleyan theology. This is the crowning doctrine as it is the crowning grace. This is the doctrine that lifts us nearest to God, "for love is the fulfilling of the law," and "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart." When the doctrine of perfect love is clearly apprehended and experienced, we have reached the summit. There is nothing beyond, I had almost said there can be nothing beyond, but GOD AND HEAVEN.





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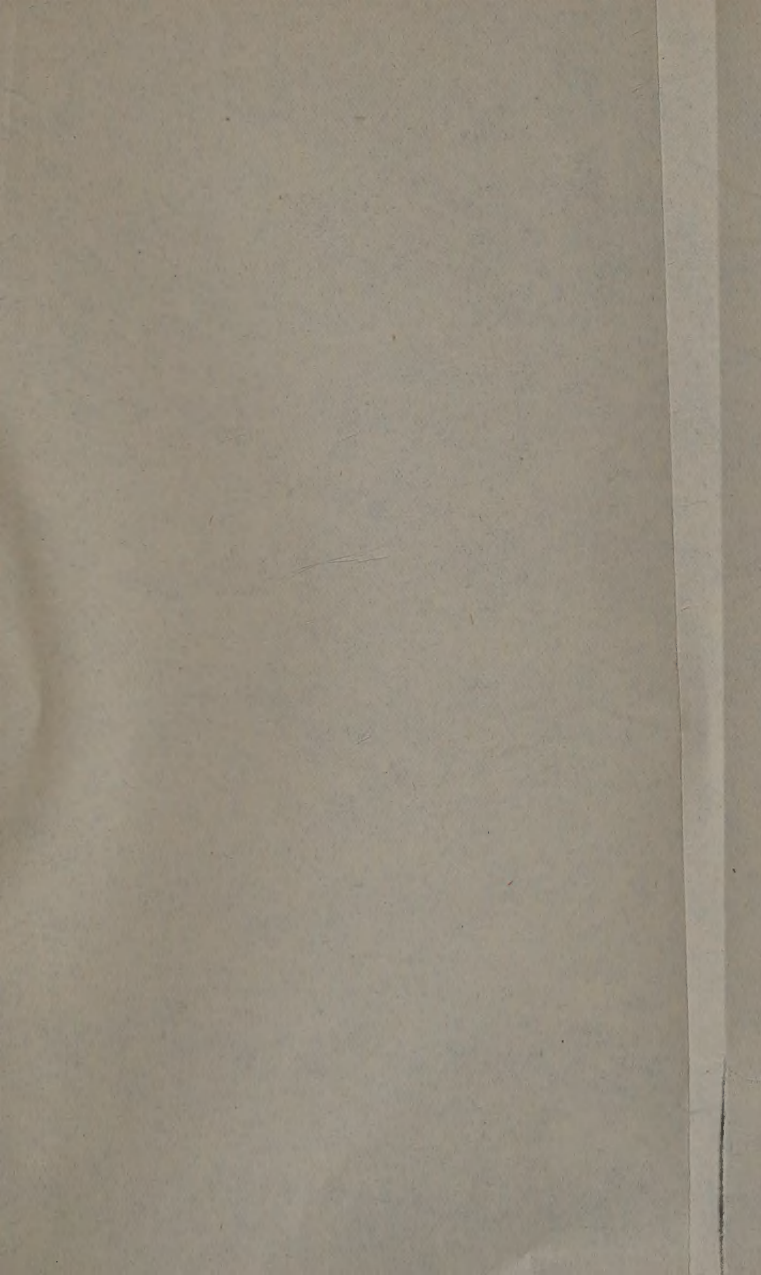
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THE END.



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